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THE LOST TRIBES.¹

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CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY morning was very fine. Mr. Mervyn stood at the window and looked out. The nearer hills were brilliantly green. The spring had almost entirely repaired the harsh brown scars which the winter torrents had scored on their sides. The distant mountains showed as masses of dim violet colour, waiting for the midday heat to deepen into glowing purple. The river lay like a twisted shining band along the valley. A deep peace was over all the land. Mr. Mervyn gazed, and the calm possessed him, a great untroubled kind of joy.

Delia stood at the breakfast table and poured water into the teapot. She set a boiled egg beside her father's plate. She cut slices of bread from a flat home-made loaf. Then she waited. She knew very well what would happen next. Mr. Mervyn was one of the few men who have read right through, and read many times, Wordsworth's longer poems. It was his habit to make quotations, more or less appropriate, from 'The Prelude' or 'The Excursion' on all possible occasions. There were two lines which he invariably cited on fine Sundays. It was for those that Delia waited. Mr. Mervyn produced them at last, turning from the window to the breakfast table. He said them again as he cracked his egg. A really brilliant Sunday morning deserved this double recognition :

'To you each evening hath its shining star
And every Sabbath day its golden sun.'

Delia received the quotation with every appearance of pleasure.

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She was a dutiful girl and she had a real affection for her father. Therefore she smiled sympathetically when he said the lines. In her heart she disliked them very much ; partly because she had heard them a great many times, and partly because they struck her as quite untrue. The suns of her Sabbath days were not golden ; because it was her duty on Sundays to instruct the three sons of Sergeant Ginty in the Church Catechism and certain passages of Holy Scripture. These three boys formed the Sunday School of Mr. Mervyn's parish. There were, of course, other children growing up in Drumianawona, but their parents preferred the ministrations of Father Roche and regarded the Church Catechism as a dangerously heretical document. Delia was very glad that they took this view. The three Ginty boys were enough for her.

They came to the church a little before eleven with shining faces and aggressively clean collars. Delia led them to a large square pew near the pulpit and set them in a row in front of her. For half an hour she impressed on them the duties of Christian people whilst they wiped their boots on the front of her skirt. The seat on which they sat was too high for them. Their legs dangled from it without reaching the ground. There was therefore every excuse for restlessness ; but Delia, who disliked being dirty, scolded them occasionally. At the other end of the church an aged woman, playing the part of sexton and bell-ringer, tugged at the bell-rope during the half-hour. The clang of the bell, occurring at regular intervals, often drowned the voices of the young Gintys, and made it very hard for Delia to hear such answers as they gave to her questions.

At twenty-five minutes past eleven Sergeant Ginty entered the church and took over control of his family. He moved them to another pew half-way down the church and warned them in an impressive whisper of the unseemliness of conversation. Delia brushed the dust from her skirt for the last time and crossed to the opposite side of the church. There she sat down in front of the harmonium and began to play. The congregation, some five-and-twenty people in all, began to dribble in. The old woman stopped pulling the bell-rope, and wiped her forehead with the corner of her shawl. Mr. Mervyn emerged from the vestry-room, Delia pulled out two stops and pressed hard against the knee swell of her instrument. She had once attended a cathedral service in Dublin, and had heard the organist greet the procession of choir and clergy with a mighty outburst of sound. She was a girl with a strong sense of dramatic fitness. She did her best to wecolme

her father to the reading-desk with chords of triumph. Mr. Mervyn read prayers and lessons in a thin quavering voice. The people muttered or whispered their responses. The time for singing a hymn arrived. Delia sang it, accompanying herself on the harmonium. The congregation stood up and watched her solemnly. This time an unexpected thing happened. Another voice joined hers in the middle of the first verse. Delia thrilled nervously and almost lost her place in the music. The congregation turned round and looked at the audacious stranger who sat near the door. Delia could not look round, but she knew that the singer could be no one but her aunt. In the second verse of the hymn Mrs. Dann forsook the treble part and supported Delia with a clear resonant alto. The congregation looked round again. Singing of this independent kind was new in Druminawona. Delia became excessively nervous, and, with her aunt's voice in her ears failed to sustain her own part. In the third verse Mrs. Dann took pity on her and went back again to the treble.

When the service was over Delia played her harmonium again while the congregation left the church. She hurried this final tune a little because she feared that if she made it too long her aunt would have escaped. She need not have been anxious. Mrs. Dann was waiting for her in the porch. The rest of the congregation stood in a group outside the church. Mrs. Dann was addressing them.

'Where I come from,' she said, 'I'm not reckoned to be much of a vocalist, but if I lived in Druminawona I'd be a top-note prima donna. I never came in among a crowd that fancied its own singing less than you do. Why can't you give out some kind of a noise if it was only to make that harmonium of yours sound less silly ?'

Then she turned and saw Delia.

'You're Delia,' she said, 'sure.'

She kissed her niece heartily. Sergeant Ginty sniffed.

'I'm your aunt Sally May,' said Mrs. Dann, 'and I admire you quite a bit. I don't know that I ever met anyone before who'd go on singing when nobody else would take the trouble to join in. I've just been giving your folks a kind of little appendix to the sermon. Your papa, Delia, is too good for them. His religion is right away up, and I set a value on it. But the congregation isn't on the same level. They haven't got beyond the Ten Commandments. If they had they'd sing.'

Sergeant Ginty sniffed again. Then he collected his three

small boys, who were staring at Mrs. Dann, and marched them off towards the gate of the churchyard. He did not approve of Mrs. Dann's flippant treatment of sacred subjects. She did not strike him as the kind of woman who would be respected or liked in Portadown.

'My ! Delia,' said Mrs. Dann, ' who's that ? '

'He's the sergeant of the police,' said Delia. ' His name is Ginty.'

' I was studying him in church,' said Mrs. Dann, ' and I made dead sure his name was Ananias.'

' Ananias ! ' said Delia.

' Or Caiaphas—Ananias and Caiaphas the High Priests. Those two men always did get mixed up in my mind. But if he isn't one of them he's the other.'

' Annas,' said Delia. She had profited by the lessons she gave to Sergeant Ginty's boys, and she knew that Annas and Ananias, though both undesirable characters, were different men.

' I'm no good at all when it comes to names,' said Mrs. Dann, ' but that policeman is just a Jewish High Priest. I'd know him anywhere from his portraits in the works of the Old Masters. I expect your papa told you that I'm interested in the Lost Tribes of Israel. It was your poor uncle that taught me the importance of the subject.'

' No,' said Delia ; ' Father didn't tell me that.'

' He would have told you sure,' said Mrs. Dann, ' if he got a proper grip on the notion. But I somehow suspected he hadn't caught on. Your papa's a dear, Delia, and I love him. I'd hug him any day he expressed the wish. But he's not what I call prompt at catching on. I expect you're better. You're poor Nathan's own niece, so you're sure to be. Nathan P. Dann had his faults, and there wasn't a man or woman in New York knew what they were better than I did, but I'd never say that he wasn't slick. You take after him, sure. You haven't had his chances so far. There's not much to catch on to in Druminawona. If there was you'd be on it, frozen tight. Just you wait, Delia. The world's going to move round a bit now I'm here.'

Mrs. Dann looked round as if to challenge the immobile world of Druminawona. She noticed that the congregation was slipping away by twos and threes, making for the churchyard gate by various paths among the tombstones. She also noticed that everybody seemed amused and pleased.

'The crowd,' said Mrs. Dann, 'is kind of melting. What's frightened them?'

'I expect,' said Delia, 'that they all want to get home to tell their friends that you called Sergeant Ginty Ananias. The sergeant isn't very popular in the place.'

'That so? Well, we may as well be getting a move on too. I suppose your papa will follow us.'

Mr. Mervyn was in fact lurking in the vestry-room. He did not want to have another interview with Mrs. Dann, because he feared that she might bring up the subject of boosting, or speak with offensive directness about Delia's marriage. His plan was to keep sanctuary until Mrs. Dann was well on her way home. He watched her and Delia reach the road together. Mrs. Dann took Delia by the arm and turned her slowly round.

'I reckon,' she said, 'that I'd better cable right off for a selection of new frocks for you, Delia. That shirt waist you have on might have been up to date fifty years ago. It's a back number now.'

Delia flushed uncomfortably.

'It's the best one I've got,' she said, 'if you mean my blouse.'

'You call them blouses on this side. I'll remember that when I get on the cable. What's the best ladies' outfitter in London?'

'In London! I don't know.'

'I'll tell my banker to send my message right through to the best man and get over a complete trousseau for you to sample. Bobby Sebright's coming over. Your papa told you that?'

'No, he didn't.'

'I've very little use for your papa as a messenger,' said Mrs. Dann. 'I told him to let you know about Bobby. I reckoned the news would cheer you up. Bobby's not an expert on fashions. That's not his department on the paper; but I never met a man yet who wasn't put off by a dowd.'

Delia was excited and pleased when her aunt spoke of getting her a complete outfit of clothes from a fashionable London shop. She was startled when she understood that she was to be dressed with a view to attracting the attention of a man who was quite unknown to her. Mrs. Dann talked so fast that emotions succeeded each other with bewildering rapidity in her listener's mind. Delia had not time to protest against the idea of attracting Bobby Sebright by the splendour of her raiment, before she was plunged into a depth of resentment by being called a dowd. She had made the

blouse she wore with her own hands. She had cut it according to a paper pattern given free to the readers of a popular magazine. She had been, until Mrs. Dann deprecated it, rather proud of the garment.

'Please, Aunt Sally May,' she said, 'don't think—'

'It's not your fault, my dear,' said Mrs. Dann. 'I'm not blaming you. Druminawona's not the place where a real fashionable costumier would be likely to settle down. Wait till I get one of those London shops on the end of the cable. I'll fix you up.'

'I'm not so very fond of clothes,' said Delia, still struggling to assert her dignity. 'I don't live for them.'

'That's not natural,' said Mrs. Dann. 'You ought to. You've got a good figure, Delia, and a real peachy complexion. Don't let your papa fill you up too full of culture. I'm not undervaluing Wordsworth one cent, but when it comes to a question of a young man poetry isn't on the same floor of the building with a ten-dollar shirt waist.'

Delia laughed. She had no experience of young men, but she knew a great deal about Wordsworth. She was prepared to believe that his poetry bored other people as much as it did her. But she had been very well brought up. She would not admit that she desired the admiration of any young man.

'But I don't want young men,' she said.

'That's modesty,' said Mrs. Dann, 'and modesty is a thing I simply adore. So will Bobby Sebright. He's New York right through to the marrow of his backbone, so he'll admire modesty for sure. He doesn't see enough of it to tire him—here's your papa now, so we'd better not talk about frills any more. He'll want something more appropriate for Sunday.'

Mr. Mervyn had come through the churchyard gate. Very much to his surprise he found himself within a few yards of Mrs. Dann. He had allowed her time enough to walk a long distance from the church. He could not have guessed that she would have stopped in the middle of the road to plan new dresses for Delia.

'Phil,' said Mrs. Dann, turning cheerfully to a subject of conversation suitable for Sunday, 'that church of yours is a one-horse show. I'd like you to see the sacred edifice that Nathan P. Dann built for Bobby Sebright's papa. It was a pretty big cheque that went through when it was finished. There were nineteen angels, life-size, in groups of three, with the odd one in the middle over the door, ranged out along the west front facing the street. Every one of them is playing Hallelujah on a different kind of musical

instrument. They're done in white marble after the original designs of Fra Angelico. My idea entirely. Nathan P. Dann never studied much in Italian art. Inside there are cherubim in stucco, coloured pink and brown, exact copies of Sir Joshua Reynolds', clouds and all complete.'

'The effect must be very striking,' said Mr. Mervyn politely.

'Refinement was what I aimed at,' said Mrs. Dann. 'And there's nothing in the way of refinement equal to the real English art. But what I aimed to do was to make the worshippers in that church kind of feel knit up with all the old English country rectories in red brick with virginia creepers on the walls, and fine plump deans with ascetic faces reading the classical poets, and the mediæval dramatists of the church on shaven lawns under immemorial oaks. I've always been clean crazy about the Oxford Movement and the Catholic spirit. Seems to me Sir Joshua is just the man to express my feeling, so I had him copied straight down in stucco with the original colouring. I'd have had the child Samuel saying his prayers in his night-shirt as an altarpiece, but old Sebright kicked. He's a Baptist, and doesn't value altars.'

'It must be a very remarkable church,' said Mr. Mervyn, still polite.

'You bet. I don't say I can bring yours up to the same level, but I mean to try what can be done. Just you leave the matter to me, Phil. I'm cabling to London anyway for a complete fit-out for Delia. I'll tell my banker to put me on to a first-rate ecclesiastical contractor and we'll get over whatever fixings he happens to have in stock. My notion would be a reredos in alabaster and one of those brass birds that hold books. If we don't like what he sends us we can have others made to order.'

'But,' said Mr. Mervyn, 'the expense—'

'Don't you fret about the expense,' said Mrs. Dann. 'Nathan P. Dann annexed quite a big box full of dollars. There'll be a lot of spending done before we'll see the bottom of it. I'll get you one of those mediæval copes, Phil. There's one I picked up in Nuremberg last time I was across, and I have it on the back of a piano. It's the cunningest thing I know in the way of embroidery, and if I can get one off the same piece for you, Phil, you'll look sweet.'

Mr. Mervyn became seriously uneasy. The Church of Ireland has made the severest possible laws against the wearing of gorgeous vestments. Mr. Mervyn did not want to come into conflict with his bishop in an ecclesiastical court, not did he wish to be entangled

in a dispute with Sergeant Ginty. The sergeant was a Protestant of a most definite kind, and in Ireland the word Protestant really means something. It is pronounced everywhere through the country as if the first of its three 't's were a 'd.' The English say the word as it is spelt. There is something more than a mere phonetic accident in the difference. The letter 'd,' as anyone can discover by saying it, conveys a sense of explosive obstinacy which cannot be expressed by a mere 't.' Take for instance the Englishman's favourite oath. 'Damn' has some force about it. Change its initial 'd' for a 't' and it becomes simply ladylike, a word which the gentlest spinster might use without offence. It is the same with Protestant. For the Englishman it has no fixed meaning at all. Ritualists use it about Nonconformists and hate having it used about themselves. Even the Nonconformists are beginning to be ashamed of it. In all probability the English will soon soften the 't' into 'th' and lisp about Protestants. In Ireland no Protestant is the least shy of the word. He pronounces it 'Protestant,' and if there were a harder and more decisive letter in the alphabet than 'd' he would use it at the end of the first syllable.

Sergeant Ginty, born and brought up in Portadown, where the Pope was not well spoken of, was a Protestant in the full Irish sense of the word. He would view an alabaster reredos with horror and would almost certainly disapprove of a brass bird in church. Mr. Mervyn hardened his heart and spoke with unusual firmness.

'I can't,' he said, 'I really can't wear a cope.'

'Theophilus,' said Mrs. Dann, 'you're making me tired.'

Mr. Mervyn felt the full weight of the rebuke. He had been warned that the use of his name in its unabridged form would be a sign of Mrs. Dann's anger. But he stuck to his point.

'And a reredos wouldn't do here,' he said. 'It really wouldn't, because—the truth is that I don't want a reredos.'

Mrs. Dann's ill-humour vanished at once.

'If you don't want the fixings, Phil,' she said, 'I'll not get them. They'd have been good for you. You'd have improved in spirit when you saw yourself parading round in that mediæval cope. You'd have swelled out and been a bigger man. But if you'd rather not I'll not say another word. I wasn't twenty-five years married to Nathan P. Dann without learning a thing or two. When he said he didn't want to go messing about the city in a chest protector I didn't speak another word. I just 'phoned off to the

doc' and told him to get ready his cough mixture. It's about the same with you and that cope, Phil. It would have been good for you ; but you don't want it, so I won't fuss.'

Mr. Mervyn felt that his refusal had been ungracious. He tried to explain to his sister-in-law that if left to himself he would wear a cope and kneel before a reredos in order to give her pleasure, that he had no personal objection to the ornaments ; but that the Church to which he belonged, possessed by a spirit of rigid Puritanism, frowned upon them. His statement was confused. He repeated himself frequently. He stammered apologies. Mrs. Dann listened to him with puzzled wonder. At last her face lit up with understanding. She interrupted him.

'Don't you say another word, Phil,' she said. 'You're quite right, and I just hate myself for being stupid. What you feel is that these surroundings'—she waved her hand towards the mountains and the river—'with the works of nature right here all the time, there would be a kind of meretricious vulgarity about angels with long trumpets. I see that now, Phil, and I thank you for pointing it out. What's this that your favourite poet says about plain living and high thinking ? That's what you aim at, Phil, in your church ; and you're right. Those little cherubims are all right in Fifth Avenue, but they'd be out of place here. You have the true artist's soul, Phil, and that's the fact.'

For so gracious a speech Mr. Mervyn could feel nothing but gratitude. He invited his sister-in-law to return with him to the rectory and have luncheon. Greatly to his relief she refused the invitation. But she had not quite done with him.

'Delia,' she said, 'you run along and get your papa's dinner for him. I'll send him after you in a minute or two when I've done speaking to him.'

Delia could not ignore so plain a command. She walked on slowly, and so Mrs. Dann took her brother-in-law by the arm and whispered to him.

'Delia's a dear,' she said. 'Bobby Sebright will be struck the minute he sets eyes on her, and I'll tell him that he's just got to marry her straight away and take her out of this. Drumawona is no place for a girl with eyes like one of those brown reproductions of the masterpieces of the artist Greuze.'

'But,' said Mr. Mervyn, 'Delia hasn't been brought up in that way.'

'I know that. You've reared her on high brow culture and

refinement. Bobby'll have to polish up a bit, and that's a fact. But he'll do it, Phil. Bobby's a young man who'd do a lot for a girl like Delia. Just you wait and see.'

Delia had not gone far along the road. She had made no attempt to reach the rectory before her father. He found her, after he had parted from Mrs. Dann, seated on a low wall, waiting for him.

'Father,' she said, 'who's Bobby Sebright?'

Mr. Mervyn hesitated. He might have replied 'Your future husband.' But he shrank from putting Delia in what seemed to him an awkward position.

'He's a young man,' he said at last, feebly.

'Is Aunt Sally May very fond of him?'

'She must be, I think,' said Mr. Mervyn.

'Do you think he'll be nice—really nice, I mean?'

Mr. Mervyn confidently expected that he would not be nice. He hesitated again.

'Anyhow it doesn't matter,' said Delia. 'He won't be here long. Did Aunt Sally May tell you that she's going to get me a lot of new clothes?'

'I hope they'll be suitable,' said Mr. Mervyn, 'I shouldn't like to see you—'

Delia tossed her head.

'If they don't suit me I won't wear them,' she said. 'But I don't see why I should go on being a dowd—'

'A what, Delia?'

'A dowd. Aunt Sally May said I was a dowd. And I don't see why I should be if I get the chance of wearing pretty frocks. I like Aunt Sally May awfully. She's what I call a real good sort.'

CHAPTER V.

THE Psalmist complained that when he laboured for peace other people made themselves ready for battle. Mr. Mervyn was fond of quoting this verse and Delia was nearly as tired of it as she was of Wordsworth's lines. Circumstances were for ever suggesting it. Outsiders, Mrs. Dann, for instance, accustomed to the fume and fret of a great city, invariably supposed that peace was, if anything, too easily attainable in Druminawona. The place seemed to promise, to Mr. Mervyn certainly, almost excessive peace. He had about fifty parishioners. He had only one child and he lived strictly

within his income. Yet he considered himself a harassed and a worried man.

It is recorded of one of the Egyptian hermits of the fourth century that he retired to an absolutely solitary corner of a remote desert in search of peace, and did not find it. The rustling of the reeds which grew near his cell became intolerable to him. No doubt, had the winds stopped blowing, the persistent activity of the sun, which will keep on rising and setting, would have got on his nerves —so difficult is the attainment of perfect peace.

Mr. Mervyn had more than the reeds and sun to complain of. His fifty parishioners had fifty different annoyances in their lives which Mr. Mervyn shared with them. At least twenty-five of them had grievances as well—grievances against the Government, the Land Commissioners, the Congested Districts Board, the County Council, and other bodies difficult to get at. They one and all held that Mr. Mervyn ought to have restrained the evil-doers. Sometimes they felt they had been unjustly treated by Divine Providence in the matter of weather, whooping-cough, or the death of a cow; and Mr. Mervyn, as a clergyman, was plainly the responsible person. But, of all his parishioners, Sergeant Ginty was the one whom Mr. Mervyn dreaded most. The others grumbled politely. Sergeant Ginty spoke his mind with the most distressing bluntness.

Therefore Mr. Mervyn sighed when he saw the sergeant waiting for him at the rectory gate. He sighed again, very deeply, when he noticed that the sergeant looked particularly truculent. But Mr. Mervyn was a very good man. A bad man, who was not a clergyman, would have cursed Sergeant Ginty. This would have been very good for the sergeant, and the curser, being bad already, would not have been much injured by the outbreak. A bad man who was a clergyman and therefore not in a position to curse, would have told the sergeant to call again the next morning, resolving not to be at home when the next morning came. But Mr. Mervyn was very good. He approached the angry sergeant with a gentle deprecating smile. He intended to return a soft answer to any angry speech.

The sergeant fully expected the soft answer and was prepared to make his own speech as hard as possible. He began by a question asked in the fiercest possible tone.

‘What’s this they’re saying?’ he said.

Mr. Mervyn did not know. He told the sergeant that he did not know. He added, without much conviction, that the sayings

of the people who are described as 'they' are invariably unimportant.

'That young lady knows, if you don't,' said the sergeant, looking at Delia.

She did not actually know, but she was in a position to guess, what was being said by the people who had gathered round her aunt at the church door. She smiled a little maliciously. She did not like Sergeant Ginty.

'She was there at the time,' said the sergeant, 'and she heard the language that was used.'

'What language?' said Mr. Mervyn.

'Ananias!' said the sergeant. "Ananias" was the word used. Delia smothered a spasmodic laugh.

'She meant Annas,' she said. 'She told me so afterwards.'

'Who?' asked Mr. Mervyn. 'Who said that? I don't understand.'

'Aunt Sally May,' said Delia, 'said the sergeant looked like Ananias, but she meant Annas—she really did.'

'Is she a Protestant?' said the sergeant.

'She is,' said Mr. Mervyn—'I rather think she's a Baptist. Her husband built a church in New York.'

'If she'd been a Baptist,' said the sergeant, 'I wouldn't have said a word about it. They're an ignorant lot, and you can't expect better from them. But if she's any kind of a Protestant she'd know rightly the kind of man that Ananias was.'

'It was Caiaphas she had in mind,' said Delia. 'She got confused about the name.'

'Any way,' said the sergeant, 'it was Ananias she said, and there's plenty will swear to that. I'm going to take an action against her for defamation of character.'

'Don't do that,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'It'll only lead to trouble.'

'But I will. I was brought up decent and respectable. I've lived decent and respectable, keeping myself to myself and mixing with no one. It's a poor thing if I'm to be called Ananias to my face, and that within three feet of the church my children was baptized in.'

'Think it over until to-morrow,' said Mr. Mervyn.

'I've more respect for the Sabbath day,' said Sergeant Ginty, 'than to be profaning it by going to law on it. I wish there was others,' he added bitterly, 'that had any regard for it at all.'

'I'll speak to her about the matter to-morrow morning,' said

Mr. Mervyn. 'I'm sure there's some mistake which can be cleared up quite easily.'

'There's no mistake,' said the sergeant, 'and there's no use talking to the like of her.'

'I'm sure she will express her regret,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'She wouldn't hurt your feelings willingly. She means to be kind to every one.'

'It's a curious way she takes of showing it, then,' said the sergeant.

Then Delia broke into the conversation.

'Sergeant,' she said, 'I'm sorry to tell you that Tommy didn't know his catechism this morning.'

This was quite true. It had been true every Sunday since Tommy first began to learn the catechism. But Delia did not say it with any desire of effecting an improvement in the boy. She hoped to divert the sergeant's anger to a fresh victim. It was better that Tommy should suffer in the flesh than that her father should be worried in mind.

'Only for what happened to-day,' said the sergeant, 'I'd leather the catechism into Tommy with my belt. But, if I was to strike a blow at him now, he'd cast it up in my teeth that the strange woman up at the church called me Ananias. I'm afeard to look my own son in the face, much less beat him as he should be beat.'

This confession of fear recalled to Mr. Mervyn's mind the conversation he had had with *Æneas Sweeny*. He, too, had been afraid of the young Gintys.

'It's a very curious thing,' he said. 'That's almost exactly the feeling that Sweeny has.'

'What feelings has Sweeny?' said the sergeant.

'He's afraid of your boys.'

'It's the first time I ever heard of *Æneas Sweeny* being afraid of anything,' said the sergeant. 'It's a good thing if somebody would drive terror into him. He wants it.'

'Mrs. Dann happened to say yesterday, in his hearing—'

'If the lady called him Ananias,' said the sergeant, 'there'd be some sense in it, for a bigger liar than *Æneas Sweeny*—'

His feelings towards Mrs. Dann were becoming more respectful. He had called her 'the woman up at the church.' He now admitted that she was a lady. He very much disliked *Æneas Sweeny*.

'What she called him,' said Mr. Mervyn, 'was Judas Iscariot.'

'She was right enough there,' said the sergeant, 'and I wouldn't wonder but the young lads, as soon as they hear it, will cast it up to him and shout it after him when he's going along the street. I wouldn't blame them.'

'That's just what *Æneas* is afraid of,' said Mr. Mervyn.

Sergeant Ginty's anger began to give way to a feeling of satisfaction.

'It's a name that'll stick to him,' he said. 'There isn't one about the place but will call it to him.'

'I hope not,' said the rector.

'They will. Don't I know them?' The sergeant chuckled grimly. He found great pleasure in the thought that his boys, and no doubt others with them, would bait *Æneas Sweeny* day after day.

'The best thing,' said Mr. Mervyn, 'is to say nothing about either name. I'll speak to Mrs. Dann about it, and I hope, sergeant, that you'll warn your boys—'

'I'll welt Tommy anyway,' said the sergeant. 'He'll be sorry before he has his dinner ate that he didn't know his "ghostly enemy" when he was asked for it.'

This was not exactly what Mr. Mervyn wanted. He intended to expostulate. The sergeant saluted stiffly. Delia was pleased. Tommy had wiped his boots on her dress persistently. He had even kicked her several times.

'Delia,' said Mr. Mervyn, as they went into the house together, 'I wonder if your aunt will stay here long.'

'I hope so,' said Delia. 'I like her, and she seems very kind.'

'There can't be much for her to do in a place like this,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'I should be sorry to lose her at once, but—'

'She's sure to stay till Mr. Sebright comes,' said Delia hopefully, 'and I think she's quite able to find occupation for herself.'

Mr. Mervyn and Delia sat down together to a very frugal dinner. The income of the rector of Druminawona is so small that only the cheapest kind of maid-servant can be hired. Onny Donovan was paid 8*l.* a year. You cannot expect competence or devotion to duty for such a sum. On weekdays, Onny was wonderfully forgetful and rarely did anything unless Delia watched her do it. On Sundays she did not even profess to do anything after breakfast. It was understood that she went to Mass at ten o'clock. This she always did. It was also understood that after Mass she went home to see her mother. This she very seldom did,

because there was a young man, called Jamesy Casey, who attracted her more than her mother did. Jamesy Casey was in the service of Father Roche ; so there was a flavour of sanctity about Onny's love affair. Delia knew all about it. She made no attempt to interfere, and allowed Onny to spend her Sundays as she liked.

Delia's own Sunday mornings were spent in church ; so the dinners eaten that day in the rectory were cooked on Saturday. They were therefore cold on Sundays, and there were no potatoes. The Irish people have never learned to like cold potatoes. They will not eat them even when oil is poured over them and they are called salad. Mr. Mervyn was a man of quiet and philosophic mind. He said grace over a cold roast chicken and then quoted Wordsworth. There are quite a large number of passages in Wordsworth's poems which can be quoted appropriately about an unsatisfactory dinner. Mr. Mervyn knew them all. So did Delia. She hated them almost as much as she did the lines about the Sabbath sun. She was not inclined to grumble about having to eat cold chicken, though, in the West of Ireland, a chicken is an exceedingly lean fowl with no breast. She rebelled against being asked to believe that a poor dinner was food either for her soul or her mind. But it was only her heart that rebelled. Her father never suspected that she did not agree with Wordsworth.

A small salary is not, as a rule, preferred to a large one by any kind of man. But there are a few people in the world who are quite honestly thankful that their incomes are small so long as the amount of work expected from them is correspondingly light. Mr. Mervyn was paid no more than 180*l.* a year, which nowadays is reckoned a very small income—so small that even the income-tax collectors, a body of men very slow to give back anything, do not attempt to keep much of what they succeed, at first, in deducting from it. Many clergymen receive much larger stipends, but they are expected to do much more work than Mr. Mervyn. He would not willingly have changed places with any of them. He was a humble man and painfully aware that he did not do what he had to do very well. If he had more to do it seemed likely that he would fail altogether. He was also, owing no doubt to his fondness for reflective poetry, a wise man. It filled him with no envy to think that there were other clergymen, bustling archdeacons, or energetic rectors of large parishes, who received three or four times his salary. He knew that these men were harassed with parochial

organisations and an intolerable number of services on Sundays. They had better dinners than he did, no doubt, but they were forced to gorge themselves hastily. They had to rush forth, primed for fresh exertions, while chewing the last morsels of their feasts. Mr. Mervyn could eat his meals in peace. He remembered, and quite believed, what Solomon said about the advantages of a dinner of herbs. After dinner Mr. Mervyn could go to sleep.

He always went to sleep on Sunday afternoons. In his study he had a battered but very comfortable arm-chair. Delia had made him four cushions for it. He could sleep in that chair as soundly as in bed. In winter he drew it up before a large turf fire, stretched his feet out, balanced a book on his knees, and allowed his eyes to close. In summer, when the Sabbath days had golden suns, he set his chair beside the window. A mellow warmth flowed to him through the glass, and he slept easily. On those rare Sundays, occurring in the West of Ireland only twice or three times in the year, when the sun was really hot, Mr. Mervyn opened his window. Then his sleep was particularly sweet. The fresh air, and the scent of the roses which covered the house, soothed him. The murmur of the river, faintly heard, was a lullaby. Delia was always careful not to disturb him. She never entered the study on Sunday afternoons. She avoided walking on the gravel path outside the window.

Mrs. Dann was not so careful of his comfort. She paid a visit to the rectory at three o'clock. The hall-door stood open; so she walked in. She glanced into the dining-room and found it empty. She went along the narrow passage which led to the kitchen, and saw Delia washing plates. Delia washed the plates after dinner on Sunday because Onny Donovan was always too much exhausted by her interview with Jamesy Casey to do anything when she came home. Delia, who was making a good deal of noise and stood with her back to the door, neither heard nor saw her aunt. Mrs. Dann withdrew softly. She went round the outside of the house and came to the study window. Mr. Mervyn was sleeping profoundly. The window was wide open. Mrs. Dann tapped sharply on a pane of glass with the point of her parasol. Mr. Mervyn awoke and blinked at her.

'Phil,' she said, 'you're preparing a sermon. There's no use denying it, for I saw you.'

Mr. Mervyn was a man with a troublesome conscience. It at once insisted on telling him that he had not been preparing a

sermon. It spoke with directness and vigour. His conscience was by far the most vigorous part of Mr. Mervyn.

'If you're through with it,' said Mrs. Dann, 'I'd like to have a talk with you.'

Mr. Mervyn's conscience made itself highly objectionable.

'I'm afraid,' he said, 'that just at that moment I had dropped off into a doze.'

'That's your modesty, Phil,' said Mrs. Dann. 'You had your eyes closed, but you were meditating. I know that, because poor Nathan always meditated at concerts. High-class music always set his mind working in that way.'

No conscience in the world would have gone on trying to be disagreeable in the face of this reiterated statement. Mr. Mervyn's gave in gracefully, and allowed him to be silent about his sleep. Mrs. Dann perched on the window-sill.

'Phil,' she said, 'I've been thinking a bit since I left you this morning. It has come home to me that there ought to be money in those Ten Lost Tribes. I might have known there was when poor Nathan tangled himself up in them. Nathan hadn't any use for notions with no money attached. Now that we have the wanderers located—'

Mr. Mervyn stopped thinking about his sleep. He sat upright in his chair and gazed in astonishment at his sister-in-law.

'Not—not in Druminawona ?' he said.

'Right here !' said Mrs. Dann. 'In this very section ! I've seen Judas Iscariot and the High Priest. That's so, isn't it ? Well now, my notion is that there ought to be money in it if properly advertised.'

All desire for sleep forsook Mr. Mervyn. He foresaw trouble of the worst kind.

'Money ?' he said. 'Surely you don't want to make any more money ? You must be very rich already.'

'You're misunderstanding me, Phil. I may not be your equal in culture. I haven't had your opportunities. New York isn't on the same level as Druminawona in the matter of appreciating the loftier kinds of poetry ; but I'm not a commercially minded woman. I'm not out to increase poor Nathan's store of dollars.'

'Of course not,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'I didn't suspect you for a moment.'

It occurred to him that his sister-in-law must wish to make his fortune by exploiting, in some way obscure to him, the personal

appearance of *Aeneas Sweeny* and *Sergeant Ginty*. He disliked the idea very much indeed.

'The proposition I'm up against is the general improvement of this locality, Phil. You can't deny that the people round about would be the better of more money distributed among them in such a way as not to endanger their self-respect. You can't deny that, Phil. My notion is to run a *Miracle Play*. There's nothing more attractive to the modern mind than genuine mediævalism.'

Mrs. Dann smiled amiably at her brother-in-law as she spoke. He realised with startling distinctness that she was incredibly, appallingly, in earnest. She actually intended to try to attract public attention to Druminawona in such a way as to bring money into the place. She intended to use her dead husband's crazy theories and her own fantastic discovery of the Jewish type in the faces of Sweeny and the sergeant in order to advertise the parish. Never in his life had Mr. Mervyn been so startled and horrified. Never had his mind worked so rapidly and with such decision as during the few moments before he replied to Mrs. Dann. He desired to discover some way of putting a stop to the absurd scheme.

Mr. Mervyn, though a Protestant, was a genuine Irishman. He had moreover lived for many years in Connacht, where Irishmen are more Irish than they are anywhere else.

'I'm afraid,' he said, 'that you won't be able to do anything unless the parish priest approves of the plan. You don't understand this country, but—'

Everybody in Ireland, at all events in the western part of it, says this about every proposal. You may wish to be an Urban District Councillor. The point to be settled is whether the priest does or does not approve of you as a candidate. You may be the paid agent of some body of philanthropists trying to organise a Society or a League. Your first business is to ask the assistance of the priest. You may be a Government official anxious to spend public money in buying towns for the benefit of the inhabitants. The priest is the person you approach. Or you may want something not to be done, an abuse left unrepented, a law left unenforced. You speak to the parish priest and place your reliance on the conservative instinct of the true ecclesiastic.

Mr. Mervyn felt that he was on strong ground. Father Roche was elderly and very fat. He would almost certainly disapprove of a *Miracle Play* in Druminawona. Such a thing was open to every possible kind of objection. It might set people thinking

on religious subjects, which is dangerous. It might, since the subject of it was likely to be more or less biblical, lead to an irreverent intimacy with matters better left to the Church. Father Roche would appreciate these risks at once.

'That's so?' said Mrs. Dann cheerfully. 'Let's go and see him right away.'

'I really think you'd better not,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'I'm certain he'd disapprove of your idea very strongly.'

'When I've made it clear to him,' said Mrs. Dann, 'that there's money in it, he'll catch on. Nathan P. Dann was no fool, Phil. He was as smart as any man in America; and he always said that there was one thing you could count on about all ministers of religion. They're in it every time if there's money to be got. You must take me round to see that priest.'

'You won't want me,' said Mr. Mervyn. 'The presbytery is quite easy to find. You can't miss it. Go straight along the street of the village—'

'Theophilus,' said Mrs. Dann, 'you walk right in and get your hat.'

Mr. Mervyn obeyed her. He could do nothing else when she addressed him as Theophilus, and there was in him a certain unaccustomed feeling of curiosity. He wanted to see how Father Roche would receive this masterful American lady.

The rectory and the presbytery stand, in Druminawona, at opposite ends of the village, and each is a little separated from the less sacred dwelling-places of the ordinary inhabitants of the place. It takes a vigorous man about ten minutes to walk from one house to the other. Sergeant Ginty, who is dignified, spends twelve minutes on the journey. Mr. Mervyn, because he is leisurely, and Father Roche, because he is unusually fat, take thirteen or fourteen minutes to do it. Mrs. Dann, in spite of the heat, took her brother-in-law from his own door to that of the presbytery in eight minutes. She noted, as she went along, the various things in Druminawona which required 'speeding up.' There were a great many of them.

The door of the presbytery stood open because Father Roche's housekeeper had gone out to take tea with a friend. Mrs. Dann knocked and got no answer.

'We'll walk in,' she said.

Mr. Mervyn laid a hand upon her arm. He was quite sure that Father Roche would not like a strange lady to walk into his

house without warning. Mrs. Dann had no misgivings and no scruples. She entered the hall. Mr. Mervyn hung back, and sidled out a little towards the middle of the road. He wondered whether it would be possible for him to slip away altogether while Mrs. Dann was exploring the presbytery. She did not give him time to make up his mind. She stood on the threshold and beckoned to him with a merry smile. Mr. Mervyn joined her. She led him into the hall, walking on tiptoe and pressing a forefinger against her lips. From a half-open door on the right came an unmistakable sound of snoring.

'Seems to me,' said Mrs. Dann, 'that the priest prepares his sermons rather louder than you do, Phil.'

Mr. Mervyn drew back hurriedly.

'We'd better go home,' he said, 'and call again some other day.'

Mrs. Dann had no manners. She pushed open the door beside her and went very softly into the room. Father Roche lay on a hard and uncomfortable sofa, but he was fast asleep. He was a bald man and the flies had troubled him. A large yellow pocket-handkerchief was spread over his head. Mrs. Dann went very quietly out of the room again. She found that Mr. Mervyn had gone back to the street. She summoned him in a loud clear voice and then banged on the door of the house with the handle of her parasol. She went on banging until Father Roche came to the door and stared at her. Mr. Mervyn tried to explain the situation.

'This is Mrs. Dann,' he said. 'She has taken Druminawona House for the present. She is my sister-in-law. She wishes to speak to you about—about a little matter she has in mind.'

'She's welcome,' said Father Roche, 'and you're welcome, too, Mr. Mervyn. Come into the house, the two of you.'

'I expect I rattled you some,' said Mrs. Dann.

'She means—' said Mr. Mervyn, who felt that he was bound to act as interpreter.

'I know well enough what she means,' said the priest. 'I've a cousin that's out in Chicago this minute; but he was home last autumn, and I'm well accustomed to the way he talked. And as for surprising me, Mrs. Dann, or putting me out, by any hour of the day or the night you might come here, it would puzzle you to do that. I'm used to it.'

He led the way into his sitting-room as he spoke. The yellow

handkerchief lay on the sofa. Father Roche picked it up and slipped it into his pocket.

'Sit you down, now,' he said, 'and if you'll excuse me for one minute I'll run into the kitchen and see if Mrs. Deveril has the kettle boiling. It's a hot day and a cup of tea will do you good after your walk.'

'If we're to have tea,' said Mrs. Dann, 'I'd better go and see after it myself.'

'Is it you?' said the priest. 'No, but you'll sit where you are. It'll be no trouble to Mrs. Deveril to wet it, if so be she has the kettle boiling. And if she hasn't it'll be the worse for her; for I've often told her that in a house like this tea might be wanted any minute.'

He left the room as he spoke, and it was fully five minutes before he returned.

'Mrs. Deveril's out!' he said, 'and I don't know how long it may be before the kettle's boiled. You'd think now that she'd have had enough of going out at her time of life, but she hasn't seemingly. Believe me or not, Mr. Mervyn, but that woman's upwards of sixty years of age this minute, and after burying two husbands and eight children (as well as four that she has in America) you'd think after that she'd have learned to content herself without running off at all hours of the day. But that's the way with all of them, begging your pardon, Mrs. Dann, for saying it; but I never met a woman yet would rest quiet unless it would be in her coffin. I'm sorry now that I can't give you a cup of tea.'

(To be continued.)

OF THE BROWNING MSS.

THE sale room of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge in the first week of May was a melancholy sight for the lovers of English literature. On the hundred and first anniversary of Robert Browning's birth, a large portion of his library, containing many volumes presented to him and his wife by friends, relations, and admirers, and many with their own autograph inscriptions, were dispersed under the auctioneer's hammer. The next day their personal relics—photographs, busts, chairs, tables, inkstands, blotting books, penwipers, Mrs. Browning's watch, a locket with Milton's hair, and the love token which formed the subject of the Sonnet from the Portuguese beginning 'I never gave a lock of hair away'—passed through the same unsympathetic medium—it may be hoped, into the keeping of those who will cherish them with fitting affection. Two days earlier, a crowded room witnessed the sight of rival dealers competing for the autograph MSS. of 'Aurora Leigh,' of the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese,' and, most intimate and sacred of all, the love-letters of the two poets; to be informed afterwards that they had been purchased by the victors in the several duels, not on commission for devoted admirers of Robert and Elizabeth Browning, but as articles to be placed in their stock and disposed of to the first purchaser prepared to pay the price to which this competition had forced them up.

It was a sorry sight; and yet it was not one for which any of those who were concerned in the sale as principals could be blamed. So far as could be ascertained, all the nearest relations on both sides were anxious to avoid a sale, and particularly a public sale, and would have been prepared, if a sale were inevitable, that at any rate the most personal and intimate objects should pass into some national collection, as a permanent memorial of the two poets. But amid the tangle of different interests, the claims of creditors, the advice of lawyers and auctioneers, sentiment had small chance in competition with legal safety, and a public sale could not be averted. With the results, at any rate the creditors will be satisfied, and presumably the lawyers, auctioneers, and

dealers will have no cause to complain ; and with this modicum of satisfaction one must be content.

Perhaps one may find other grounds of consolation. The disposal of the minor volumes in the poet's library will, no doubt, have enabled many of the devotees of Robert Browning to secure as mementos books which once belonged to him, and which bear inscriptions in his handwriting. The larger manuscripts were few in number. There was, of course, first of all in sentimental interest, the wonderful collection of those 284 letters which Robert Browning wrote to Elizabeth Barrett between January 10, 1845, and September 19, 1846, and the 287 which he received from her during the same period. These, so far as is at present publicly known, await a purchaser who will make a sufficient advance on the 6,550*l.* for which they were knocked down by Messrs. Sotheby. There was the MS. of Robert Browning's last volume, 'Asolando,' purchased for 990*l.*, it is understood for America. There were two copies, one perfect and one imperfect, of the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese,' Elizabeth Barrett's high-water mark in poetry, and there was the complete MS. of 'Aurora Leigh,' which Ruskin declared to be the greatest poem in the English language. Further, there were several hundreds of Mrs. Browning's letters, before and after marriage, to various correspondents, of which the cream has, no doubt, in the main been skimmed off for previous publication, but of which many remain unpublished. With regard to the 'Asolando' volume, which the poet intended to go to Balliol College, with the rest of his MSS. from 'Balaustion' to the 'Parleyings,' and which his son retained only for his own lifetime, one may regret that their expressed desire has been baulked of its fulfilment ; but with respect to the others, however much one may wish that they could have remained in England, it is only fair to remember that America, where appreciation of both poets, and especially of Robert Browning, was earlier and more enthusiastic than in England, has earned the right to possess any of these relics which she cares to acquire, and will respect them not less than they would have been respected here. Readers of Mrs. Browning's letters will not doubt that both of them would have gladly recognised the claims of America in this respect. And it is to be remembered, finally, that the two greatest MSS. of all, the complete 'Ring and the Book' and the copy of the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' which Mrs. Browning gave to her husband in the early days of their marriage (pushing them into his pocket and

hastily retiring from the room), are safe in the hands to which they were given by the poet and by the poet's son—those of Mrs. George Murray Smith, the wife of Browning's publisher and most valued friend. It is also good to know that the surviving copyright in all things Browning now belongs to the firm which have been the Browning publishers since 1868, Smith, Elder, & Co.

But among the minor manuscripts were many which have a literary as well as a sentimental interest. One might perhaps wish that the unpublished verses of both poets had been destroyed by them out of hand when once the decision had been taken not to publish them. Such waifs and strays are a permanent difficulty to editors. If the author is sufficiently eminent, publication of everything of his that remains above ground is eventually inevitable, and an editor is torn between the natural desire to make his edition complete, and his equally natural reluctance to print matter which is not worthy of its author, and which the author himself did not consider worthy of publication. The ultimate solution is probably some limbo of an appendix, which can be searched once for all by the curious and then left to its obscurity. Yet even in such an outer darkness one does not care to meet Browning's freakish rhymes to 'rhinoceros' or 'Timbuctoo'; while it is an injustice to two, if not three, of the stars of our Victorian literature to reprint, at any time or in any place, the 'Lines to Edward Fitzgerald.'

One little group of manuscripts, however, in the delicate handwriting of Mrs. Browning, has a special interest, personal and literary, and its publication can do no harm to anyone. In September and October 1845 Robert Browning was engaged in preparing for the press the poems which were published in November as Part VII of his 'Bells and Pomegranates,' under the general title of 'Dramatic Romances and Lyrics.' Five of them had previously appeared in 'Hood's Magazine' during 1844 and the spring of 1845, and these had come to Miss Barrett's notice in July; the rest were sent to her in manuscript and proof in the course of the autumn. Her criticisms were asked for honestly and were sent loyally; and they lie before us now in these little sheets. They are not criticisms in the larger sense of the term, not appreciations of the general scheme of the poems, but merely suggestions for verbal alterations, the little queries which a friend may make of a friend's work, especially when the critic is himself (or herself, as in this instance) a poet. Those who do not care

for the minutiae of poetic production, or are content with the result without inquiring as to the means, will have no concern with these; but some of those whose interests are bound up with the poetry of Robert Browning may care to see how the poet who was afterwards to be his wife helped him.

Those who have any acquaintance with the bibliography of Browning's poetry (and some such acquaintance is really essential to an understanding of the development of his genius, since the familiar classification of the shorter poems has obscured their chronological order) know that the original 'Dramatic Romances and Lyrics' of 1845 are a very different group of poems from the 'Dramatic Romances' as they appear in every edition after 1863. Part VII of 'Bells and Pomegranates' consisted of twenty-one poems. Of these, only six remained under the heading of 'Dramatic Romances' in 1863. Thirteen were transferred to the 'Dramatic Lyrics,' and two to 'Men and Women,' where we still find them to-day. Of the original twenty-one, twelve receive annotations from Miss Barrett in the papers now before us, in addition to 'A Soul's Tragedy' and 'Luria,' which formed the eighth and last part of 'Bells and Pomegranates,' published a few months later, in April 1846. These twelve poems include the five which had previously appeared in 'Hood's Magazine' ('The Tomb at St. Praxed's,' 'The Flower's Name,' 'Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis,' 'The Laboratory,' and 'The Boy and the Angel'), together with 'How they brought the Good News,' 'Pictor Ignotus,' 'Italy in England,' 'England in Italy,' 'The Confessional,' 'Saul,' and 'Time's Revenges.' In addition, some comments (but of a more general nature) on 'The Lost Leader,' 'The Lost Mistress,' 'Home Thoughts from Abroad,' 'The Flight of the Duchess,' 'Earth's Immortalities,' 'Nay, but you who do not love her,' 'Night and Morning,' 'Claret and Tokay,' and 'The Glove,' which constitute the rest of the volume, appear in the published letters, and so complete Miss Barrett's criticisms on the whole group of poems.

These criticisms for the most part relate to small details of phrase or rhythm. It is curious to find Elizabeth Barrett, whose ear, to judge from her own poetry, was not remarkably sensitive, criticising the imperfect rhythm of Robert Browning. But Miss Barrett was a better critic than poet at this period (which, be it remembered, was before the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' and 'Aurora Leigh'); and it is rather in imperfect rhymes than in defective rhythms that her ear is mostly at fault. On the other

hand, Browning in his earlier lyrics had a certain staccato jerkiness, of which he subsequently cured himself; and most readers will agree that his correspondent's criticisms were justified. Miss Barrett's notes upon 'Saul' will illustrate this point, and at the same time furnish a fair sample of her comments in general:

“Nor till from his tent”

Would you not rather write “until,” here, to break the course of monosyllables, with another reason?

“For in the black mid-tent silence
Three drear days”—

A word seems omitted before “silence”—and the short line is too short to the ear—not to say that “drear days” conspires against “dread ways” found afterwards. And the solemn flow of the six lines should be uninterrupted, I think.

‘The entrance of David into the tent is very visible and characteristic,—and you see his youthfulness in the activity of it—and the repetition of the word “foldskirts” has an Hebraic effect.

“But soon I descried
Something more black than the blackness.”

Should it not be “A something”—more definitely? And the rhythm cries aloud for it, it seems to me.

“The vast, upright”—

Quaere—“the upright” . . . for rhythm.

“Then a sunbeam burst thro’ the blind tent-roof
Showed Saul.”

Now, will you think whether to enforce the admirable effect of your sudden sunbeam, this first line shall not be rendered more rapid by the removal of the clogging epithet “blind”—which you repeat, too, I believe, farther on in the next page? What if you tried the line thus,

“Then a sunbeam that burst through the tent-roof—
Showed Saul!”

The manifestation in the short line appears to me completer from the rapidity being increased in the long one. I only *ask*. It is simply an impression. I have told you how very fine I do think all this showing of Saul by the sunbeam—and how, the more you come to see him, the finer it is. The “all heavily hangs,” as applied to the king-serpent, you quite feel in your muscles.

' The breaking of the band of lilies round the harp is a relief and refreshment in itself after that dreadful sight. And then how beautifully true it is that the song should begin so . . . with the sheep—

" As one after one
Docile they come to the pen door"—

But the rhythm should not interrupt itself where the sheep come docilely—and is not a word wanted . . . a syllable rather . . . before that "Docile ?" Will you consider ?

" The long grasses stifling the water " . . . How beautiful *that* is !

" One after one seeks its lodging
As star follows star
Into the blue far above us,
—So blue and so far ! "

It appears to me that the two long lines require a syllable each at the beginning, to keep the procession of sheep uninterrupted. The ear expects to read every long and short line, in the sequence of this metre, as one long line,—and where it cannot do so, a loss . . . an abruptness . . . is felt—and there should be nothing abrupt in the movement of these pastoral, starry images—do you think so ? Is it not Goethe who compares the stars to sheep ? Which you reverse here.

" Would we might help thee, my brother ? "

Why not, " Oh, would," &c.—it throws a wail into the line, and swells the rhythm rightly, I think.

" Next she whom we count
The beauty, the pride of our dwelling"—

Why not " For the beauty " or " As the beauty ? "

" But I stopped—for here, in the darkness
Saul groaned."

Very fine—and the preceding images full of beauty and characteristic life !—but in this long line, I just ask if the rhythm would gain by repeating " here " . . . thus . . .

" But I stop here—for here in the darkness"—

I just ask, being doubtful.

' And the shaking of the tent from the shudder of the king . . . what effect it all has !—and I like the jewels *waking* in his turban !

" So the head—but the body stirred not."

If you wrote "So the head—but the body . . . *that* stirred not"—
Just see the context.

"The water was wont to go warbling
Softly and well."

Is not a syllable wanted at the beginning of the short line, to make
the water warble softly . . . right softly ?

"And heard her faint tongue
Join in, while it could, to the witness"—

Would "joining in" be better to the ear ?

"And promise and wealth for the future"

I think you meant to write "the" before promise.

'All I said about the poem in my note, I think more and more.
Full of power and beauty it is—and the conception, very striking.'

'E. B. B.'

That is one little batch of notes, one morning's work, it may be, of the invalid lying on her back on her couch, and writing in her tiny hand on tiny sheets of note-paper—for, as she said, she was a small woman, and liked to have small things about her. The reader who will take the pains to compare the criticisms with the poem as it stands to-day (remembering that, in its original form, it was printed in alternate long and short lines, in place of the uniform long lines to which we are accustomed) will see that in almost every case Browning had the wisdom to accept his critic's suggestions. It was the most useful form of criticism—accepting and admiring the general conception and treatment, but suggesting minor improvements in detail which could be adopted without difficulty. The criticism which begins by telling a poet to alter his whole method is rarely of any use.

It would be tedious to go through the other poems in detail. In the lyric poems Miss Barrett's criticisms are mostly directed to improvements in rhythm and the removal of small obscurities. In 'Luria,' on the other hand, she did good service by discouraging a trick of inversion, and pointing out the greater force given by directness. No one who knows this noble poem will question the inferiority of the first form of these lines (Act I., ll. 139–142)—

'If in the struggle when the soldier's sword
Before the statist's hand should sink its point,
And to the calm head yield the violent hand,
Virtue on virtue still have fallen away . . .'

to the simple, directer form in which they now stand. 'Tell me if an air of stiffness is not given by such unnecessary inversions,' says the critic in another instance; and again, when she has set straight another contorted phrase, 'You allow the reader to see at a glance what otherwise he will seek studiously.' This is a pregnant phrase, which Browning in later years might have done well to bear in mind. Not that the want of directness in some of the later poems, as compared with these of the Italian period, is to be attributed to the loss of his wife's correcting hand; for we know that the married poets made a point of keeping their work independent and apart until it was ready for the press. Nevertheless, the lesson indicated by these few criticisms seems to have borne fruit in the greater clarity of the poems published between 1845 and 1864 ('*Dramatis Personæ*'), and was not always forgotten afterwards.

A few more general expressions of opinion may be quoted in conclusion. Of '*Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis*,' that delightful story of vengeance on a pedant, Miss Barrett writes:

'Do you know that this poem is a great favourite with me—it is so new, and full of a creeping, crawling, grotesque life. Ah, but . . . do you know, besides, it is almost reproachable in you to hold up John Knox to derision in this way!'

Of '*The Tomb at St. Praxed's*' (as the poem was originally called, of which Ruskin said that he knew no other piece of modern English in which there is so much told of the Renaissance spirit):

'This is a wonderful poem, I think, and classes with those works of yours which show most power . . . most unquestionable genius in the high sense. You force your reader to sympathise positively in his glory in being buried.'

She notices also 'the rushing and hurrying life of the descriptions' in '*England in Italy*' (with its alternative title '*Autumn at Sorrento*'), 'tossed in one upon another like the grape bunches in the early part, and not kept under by ever so much breathless effort on the poet's part,' and adds: 'For giving the *sense of Italy*, it is worth a whole library of travel-books.' Of the companion poem, '*Italy in England*,' which Mazzini read to his fellow-exiles as a proof that at least one Englishman sympathised with them, she says: 'I like the simplicity of the great-heartedness of it (though perhaps half-Saxon in character), with the Italian scenery all around—it is very impressive.'

It is not always easy for the first critic of a new poem (and Browning's were so new that nothing like them, except the 'Dramatic Lyrics' in Part III of the 'Bells and Pomegranates,' had ever appeared in English literature) to hit on just the features to which its ultimate reputation is due; but Miss Barrett does so again and again with unerring touch. Of 'Pictor Ignotus' she says: 'This poem is so fine, so full of power, as to claim every possible attention to the working of it: it begins greatly, grandly, and ends so,—the winding up winds up the soul in it. The versification too is noble . . . I cannot tell you how much it impresses me.' And she appreciates fully the verve and vigour of the great ride from Ghent to Aix:

' You have the very trampling and breathing of the horses all through—and the sentiment is left in its right place, through all the physical force and display . . . I know you must be proud of the poem, and nobody can forget it who has looked at it once . . . By the way, how the "galloping" is a good galloping word! And how you felt it, and took the effect up and dilated it by repeating it over and over in your first stanza . . . doubling, folding one upon another, the hoof-treads.'

The textual criticism of Browning cannot have quite the same value as that of an artist in words, such as Tennyson, the lessons of whose fastidious taste are so well brought out in his son's biography. Nevertheless there is interest in tracing the development of his power of self-expression from the turbid waters of 'Pauline' and the tangled thickets of 'Sordello' up to the supreme mastery of thought and phrase which marks the fifty 'Men and Women' of 1855, and which endured through the finest poems of 'Dramatis Personæ' to the best books of 'The Ring and the Book.' And in the fragments of the story which have here been offered to the sympathetic reader there is the further interest that they form an episode in the beautiful idyll of the love of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning.

FREDERIC G. KENYON.

DAWN AT DELHI. MAY 11, 1857.

'North was the garden where Nicholson slept ;
South was the sweep of a battered wall.'

LYALL.

THE restoration of Delhi to her place as capital of India, after over a century's overslaugh, has stirred public interest in the history that surrounds it. It has a history before which that of ancient Rome even appears trivial. Far back in the ages long, long before Alexander of Macedon crossed the Hydaspes, or Hannibal passed the Alps, or ever Romulus slew his brother, Delhi was the capital of a powerful organised kingdom. City after city has risen on the ruins of its predecessor like the successive ruins of ancient Troys, but always to more purpose. For miles round the city the dust is the ashes of dead generations. For many a square mile the whole plain is covered with ancient cemeteries, and the very dust devils whirl the ashes of Afghan and Mughal in high spirals and eccentric circles. For miles round, the old imperial suburbs are dotted with ruined tombs and mansions. Tombs, forts, temples, minarets, and domes dot the horizon in every direction. A centre for the globe-trotter, maps, guide-books, picture post-cards, and the like abound. Since the Durbar the traveller's interest is even more stimulated. The Indian public, the European portion of it, are now studying their own history of Delhi too, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the folk who made it. To them and the traveller a dim drop scene exists in the background on which are mingled Raja Prithwi, the Slave Kings, the Ghilzai and Pathan Dynasties, and then the great Mughal Emperors, all about the same relationship to each other, as time goes, as that given by the schoolboy to Julius Caesar and William the Norman. Of late people have been reading of the first battle of Delhi, so far as the English are concerned, when General Lake beat the French trained battalions of the Maratha in 1803, hard by Indarpat, within sight of the minarets of the capital. They have also found that while there is a clasp for 'Delhi' on the Mutiny medal, there are

clasps for 'Battle of Delhi,' and 'Defence of Delhi,' on the famous old 'Army of India' medal. The latter they have found refers to a very wonderful defence of the immense *enceinte* of the city by Colonels Ochterlony and Burn, with a few sepoy battalions against the whole host of Holkar, when General Lake had gone south to find this same Holkar who had doubled on him.

Then the connection of Delhi with the great tragedy of the Mutiny is ever fresh in the minds of visitors. Every visitor must drive through the battered Kashmir Gate, every one goes to the Ridge to see the monuments. During the Durbar the Ridge was thronged, and on the day of the King's entry the whole of the artillery present were formed up on its stony faces to thunder 101 salvoes 'lest they forget.' Oh yes! the great drama of that wonderful siege and its happenings is fairly well known, and of late we have been treated to extremely interesting reflogging of the old waters as to whether or no General Sir Archdale Wilson was or was not a man of character, or merely a tired and gallant old soldier who tried to do his duty without being very well equipped by nature to do so. If only the latter, why, then let us accord the more credit, for most soldiers understand, even if they don't talk about it, that not every one who dons a red coat thereby becomes a leader of men. Therefore he who can compel the Kings of Orion, and achieve any measure of success, when not naturally so gifted, is worthy of great admiration and sympathy. Once again 'the toad beneath the harrow knows exactly where each tooth-point goes,' and soldiers know what goes on under the mask of a sun-dried face and a grizzled moustache. The controversy however is always good, if well conducted. 'Soldier know thyself' is an essential motto, and to discuss others in all courtesy and sympathy, is to learn.

However, all that is merely by the way, and brings us to the real point of this paper, and that is that, while men read eagerly and study the ancient history and the story of the grim limpet English on their ridge, they almost forget the real romance of the story. They do not follow in all its intense tragedy the opening hours of that fateful Monday, May 11, 1857, and the extraordinary dramatic opening of the scene. Extraordinary because so simple, so gradual, and then so intent. Everyone, of course, knows of the great event that will always live in history, the blowing up of a portion of the magazine by the devoted *personnel* of the Ordnance Department. Something of the tragedy of the mainguard by the

Kashmir Gate is also known, but little of the commencement. The scene is worth reconstructing.

A few years ago there was a feeling prevailing that it would be well to let the past bury the past, to let all men and all races think only of the great effort both Government and public were making for the progress and prosperity of the peoples of India. But there is now a very persistent party of Indians who will not let bygones be bygones, who openly talk of the Mutiny as a war of freedom, and are endeavouring to reproduce it. Therefore it is well that our people should never forget the signs and portents and happenings, and draw their lessons therefrom. Those who care for the strange romance of it all will always ponder over the lesser happenings, and try to recreate the atmosphere, and since the other side is revelling in its memories with true Indian illogic, the romanticists may enjoy their sensations guiltlessly.

May 1857 was a cool month as Indian Mays go. The whole of that summer, it is recorded, was a phenomenally cool one. Folk, European folk, found tents in northern India bearable in June, when as a rule they are fiery furnaces. Many a small item was cast in our favour in that eventful year, from the changing of the hour of church parade at Meerut to the early coming of the rains.

But the coolness of a cool Indian May is only a matter of comparison. At the best of times the weather would be hot, and the Europeans had settled down to their hot-weather hours and programme of daily business. A few of the women and children had gone to the hills. In these days it would have been ninety per cent. The country was queer, there was no doubt about that, but to the ordinary mind not more so than would furnish something out of the normal to discuss at mess and at the station club. Officers had been passing through on their way to their regiments on completing their musketry courses at the rifle depots of Sialkot and Umbala. The gossip from the schools, which alone had the new rifle, regarding the incidents of the greased cartridges, had come into the station first-hand. Everybody however was sure that their 'Jacks' would take these cartridges all right, and that the trouble was only in certain 'slack' regiments. The Mangal Pandy incident was already ancient history, he and his native officer had been hanged, and so forth. The talk was far more of who could get to Kashmir, and whether the quail were in, in large numbers. There had of course been this silly trouble with the 3rd Cavalry at Meerut, but the court-martial was just over. The

native officers of the Delhi garrison who had gone to serve on it had returned the day before.

So on the Monday morning, early, according to the routine of the hot season, everyone had gone to his work. Up in the cantonments behind the Ridge the garrison had paraded to hear the sentence on *Jemadar Isaree Pandy*¹ read out according to custom. The troops had been dismissed, but the ordinary barrack routine was in progress. Quite how the first communication arrived to the civil magistrates that something was wrong is not known. It is almost certain that Mr. Fraser, the commissioner, had news of some sort early, and had sent a message up to the brigadier. It is said that a line of horsemen, presumably in file, were seen galloping along the road from Meerut towards the bridge of boats over the Jumna. Whatever the news was, it induced Mr. Simon Fraser, the commissioner, and Mr. Hutchinson, the collector, to proceed at once to the Calcutta Gate and have it closed. That is the gate close under the Selimgarh where the main railway line from Ghaziabad now enters the city. This was probably between 7 and 8 A.M., when the sun was full high and the heat of the day already threatening.

Now, the story will be remembered of how the mutineers of the 3rd Light Cavalry galloped to the palace,² calling on the old King to admit them and raise his standard. The exact story of what occurred is of very great interest. It will be remembered that it was Captain Douglas, of the King's Guard, who first interviewed the mutineers and ordered them away and to present their petition in due form. Captain Douglas belonged to the 31st Bengal Native Infantry, and was commandant of the Palace Guards, a numerous force, dressed in some imitation of the Bengal Line. We know very little about them, though from the fact that they were commanded by a British officer (who was also on political duty connected with the King) we may be sure that this corps resembled in its drill and routine one of our own native regiments. It was certain to have been recruited from Oudh for the most part. What manner of man the commandant was, history does not say, though no doubt there are relatives of his living who could tell us. We may imagine him like so many of the younger political officers found by the army, especially energetic and competent, with some

¹ Executed for not preventing Mangal Pandy shooting the adjutant of the 34th at Barrackpore.

² The Fortress-palace also known as the Delhi Fort.

considerable sympathy with the fallen fortunes of the Mughal family. His work in connection with all the retainers and royal relatives, with their thousand claims, intrigues, and quarrels, must have been considerable. What the state of affairs within the palace in ordinary times was, has been very clearly drawn by Mrs. Steel in her wonderful book 'On the Face of the Waters.'

Douglas lived in the quarters over the Lahore or main gate of the palace, the one through which the royal procession passed in 1911. Those who ordinarily read the account of this morning at Delhi imagine him as appearing at his window or balcony above the gate, and thence ordering some excited troopers down below to go away and not disturb the King at this early hour. Mr. Fanshawe, recently Commissioner of Delhi, in his 'Delhi Past and Present,' has gone into this matter of detail, evidently struck with the peculiar interest of it, not thinking that His Majesty's action at the Durbar would make it even more interesting. Undoubtedly Captain Douglas at an early hour had conversation at the Lahore Gate with one of the mutineer horsemen, little knowing of course his real status, but this was not the occasion on which the mutineers of the 3rd Light Cavalry called on the King to protect and lead them. Later, exactly when it is impossible to say, the first arrivals from Meerut in any number, cavalry troopers again, crossed the Jumna either by the ford or the bridge of boats, and, finding the Calcutta Gate already closed against them, turned into the *kadir*, the wide, scrub-covered flats which border the actual river. On this side the walls of the palace overhang the river-bed, and on the edge of these walls, on the raised interior, stood and still stand the Royal apartments. The Diwan-i-Khas,¹ the Royal Bath, and the Moti Musjid² look out over the river to catch such breeze as may be moving. The space in the bed below is known as the 'Zer Jharoka,' literally 'beneath the windows,' a recognised palace expression applied generally to a space beneath the Royal or Imperial apartments from which the Kings could show themselves to the public at certain fixed times.

It was to this 'Zer Jharoka,' to be attained without forcing any guard or gate, that the troopers betook themselves, entirely in accordance with Oriental custom, to call on the King to protect them and place himself at their head and win back an Indian crown. It is this incident that people generally imagine to have happened below the Lahore Gate, the main gate of the fortress-

¹ Private hall.

² Pearl mosque.

palace (far away from the river), above which were Captain Douglas's quarters. The mutineers knew that the King lived immediately above the place from which they clamoured, and could show himself to them from the Musamman Burj, a small tower projecting slightly from the wall into the river-bed. From this tower, or close to it, a small staircase and wicket led down to the river-bed itself. Below this Musamman Burj, then, the troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry stood fresh from the murder of their officers and their families at Meerut—fierce, frightened, exalted, despairing, in their alternating moods.

It was from this same Musamman Burj that His Majesty King George and his consort Queen Mary looked down, in their golden crowns, on the assembled thousands of the multitude the day that they held their garden court in the palace grounds of the Mughal Emperors in the year of Our Lord 1911.

The old King, aroused by the clamour from below, wanted some one else to lean on. He must well have known what was brewing, but had no idea whether these were successful or fugitive rebels. He at once sent for Captain Douglas, who hurried thither along the covered way from the main gate with its long row of bazaar stalls. One may pause to wonder if the Royal gardener gave him the usual buttonhole offering as he crossed the lawns. Joining the aged King, it is understood that he wished to go down the wicket steps and talk to the men below. This the King would not permit. So he addressed them from the top of the wall by the Musamman Burj, bidding them not disturb His Majesty, but if they had a petition to present to come later to the *Kotwali*. The troopers then, after probably uttering some insolence or abuse, galloped off to the Raj Ghat Gate of the city and thence into the open space between the palace and the city. Some commenced attacking any Europeans to be found in the adjoining civil station of Daryagunj ('the suburb on the river'). Others galloped along to the Lahore Gate of the palace.

We may here profitably turn aside from the main story to compare the two scenes below the Musamman Burj. First, that scene just depicted : the Jumna *kadir* lying below the *terrepleine* of the palace, the opposite banks and distance shimmering in the haze, and heavy with the dust raised by the troopers' horses. The bridge of boats, half a mile or so away, with its stream of laden bullocks and thronging peasantry attending the markets of the city. To the left, jutting out from the palace wall, the frowning old bastioned

fort known as the Selimgarh. To the right, beyond the end of the wall, the minarets of the Golden Mosque, and the English bungalows hugging the crest of the river-bed—bungalows in which the wives and families of the residents were about sitting down to breakfast, unconscious of any danger. Down on the short turf below the walls a knot of, perhaps, fifty troopers of the Light Cavalry, clad for the most part in their famous French-grey regimentals, with perhaps a *puggaree* on their head in lieu of the regulation Dragoon shako. This blue-grey is the colour still worn by the only three regiments of the old Light Cavalry left in the Indian Army—the 26th, 27th, and 28th, until recently the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Madras Light Cavalry. It was the uniform of a force that considered itself *corps d'élite*, and which, during the Mutiny, was so well known to our troops, as being constantly opposed to them. On the wall above, the captain of the guard, alone, or almost alone, save, perhaps, for an orderly of his guard. Behind the marble grille in the marble buildings, on the wall, the trembling old relic of a once all-powerful dynasty: the captain, firm and resolute, ordering the men away to present their petition in due form, the troopers excited, defiant, gesticulating. Possibly some may have fired at the Englishman with their carbines. He died within the hour, and few of the actors survived the siege, so the details are scanty, but he who roams the deserted palace may read.

Then the second scene: the same rose-red fortress-palace, the same Jumna *kadir*, the same Musamman Burj and marble buildings, the same wonderful India around. Not, however, the one solitary Englishman in white braided jacket and his solitary sword. On the tower the British Emperor of India and his Queen in their crowns and robes. Around them the highest princes and nobles of India, and all the officers of the army of the North, all the governors, the judges, and the magistrates. Below, thousands on tens of thousands of his Indian subjects, marching up towards him in two great streams side by side, divided by a fence, Hindus on one side, Muhammadans on the other, and then wheeling past him outwards with every sign of enthusiasm. The Indian understands the meaning of the word *Badshah* (an emperor), and the outward and visible sign of power and protection . . . the great ruler under whom folk live their lives in security, each as he will. For many hundred years India had not seen peace, for in the last generations of the Empire all was unrest, and the last of the Emperors, only Emperors in name—the last of them not even that.

So the real *Badshah* himself, with all the signs of power around him, was to them a sign that the sun should shine and the rain rain in due season. And so long as peace be preserved, what more could a simple people ask for ?

So there you have the contrast. The great King of a great people—who, though partly fetish and partly fools to many of their dark-skinned fellow-subjects, try to rule in the name of truth and justice and righteousness—with the tens of thousands of his people below him. On the other, the fierce flushed faces of the excited soldiery, fresh from murder and broken faith, stirred for the moment with religious enthusiasm and the glamour of an act of war, calling on the aged descendant of an ancient dynasty, parleying with a solitary English officer, who claimed to represent the ancient potentate.

A curious contrast beneath the same sky, and above the same marble and red granite plinths.

And so mutiny, raging and uncurbed, had come to Delhi, ever the centre of Empire, as the loadstone points to the northward.

By this time a message had come to Douglas from Mr. Fraser to join him at the Calcutta Gate of the city. So leaving the Royal presence and the aged King to his courtiers and anxieties, the captain of the guard returned to the Lahore Gate, across the quiet lawns outside the Royal quarters, with the drowsy splash of the fountains and the murmur of doves alone disturbing the atmosphere. Possibly he returned to his cool quarters high above the old main gateway of the palace-fort, to further arm himself, and perhaps to tell his guests for the week-end that there was some mysterious disorder afoot. The guests were Mr. Jennings, the chaplain of Delhi, with his daughter and her friend Miss Clifford. Possibly he may not have considered anything serious was amiss, and, having his sword on him, did not go up to his quarters for a fire-arm, but passed out under the cool, dark, double gateway. We can picture the gate-guard turning out to him, possibly in all faith, probably with their tongues in their cheeks, and can almost see the line of red coats and slovenly placed cross-belts, copying the ceremony of the British guard. Out onto the glacis then passed the captain, and hurried to the Calcutta Gate. The troopers of the cavalry, riding up to the palace gate a few minutes later, would have learnt from the guard that their commander had passed out. At the City Gate, which they had closed, Douglas found Fraser, the commissioner of Delhi, and Hutchinson, the collector. The usual

military guard was at the gate, found that day, as also the guards at the Kashmir Gate, which was the main guard, and at the Magazine, by the 38th Native Infantry from the cantonments. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, the joint magistrate, had been at the gate also, but had gone off to the *kotwali*, where the central police-station was. The troopers followed Douglas round the glacis of the fort to the Calcutta Gate, and at once attacked the little group of sahibs, the 38th guard remaining passive or fraternising. Mr. Hutchinson was cut down, the commissioner's own escort of Jhajjar sowars remained inactive, and Mr. Fraser seized a carbine from one of them and shot dead a trooper of the 3rd Light Cavalry. Breaking through them in his trap, lashing his horse to a gallop, he succeeded in getting his wounded companion to the Lahore Gate, where Douglas, who had jumped down into the fort ditch, joined them with a badly injured ankle. Some servants and *chaprassis* eventually carried the wounded men up into the quarters, where the chaplain and the two English girls were sitting anxiously, and whence the former had been watching with his telescope the movement on the Meerut road. Outside and in the palace the whirlwind was rising, the quiet morning cries of the muezzin from the mosques was changing. From 'Prayer is better than sleep,' the call had risen to a fiercer key. 'Glory for all and heaven for those who bleed,' the call of militant Islam. 'Din ! Din ! Victory of Muhammad !' A Moslem city, like an Irish one, is agog for religious riot. Out in the suburb of Daryagunj, mutineers and bazaar riff-raff were indulging in the novel sport of baiting and murdering Europeans and Christians. Inside the palace a crowd had gathered in the gateway at the entrance to Douglas's quarters. Mr. Fraser had harangued them, and it is recorded that Douglas had sent an urgent message to the King to send a gun down to the Lahore Gate, and also to send litters to take the two English ladies to the protection of the Royal ladies' quarters. Whatever was done was too late. As Fraser turned to go up the stairs, some one of the crowd, said to be an Abyssinian—there were adventurers from all lands in the palace following—by others a lapidary, struck him down. It was enough ; the crowd, then eager for blood, rushed up the staircases to the commandant's quarters : the Englishmen's servants, as was so often the case, strove to save their masters, and closed the doors against the mob. Unfortunately, there was another entrance and stairway, or it is just possible something might have intervened at any rate to save the ladies. What

further happened is all conjecture and the reports of eye-witnesses. The whole of the small party were ruthlessly massacred then and there, and all British authority within the palace died.

Outside : the story comes within the facts of common and more popular knowledge, the portion of our Delhi history that we read. There were the massacres in Daryagunj, the defence of the roof of a house by the Beresfords, the killings in the bungalows—bungalows which are inhabited to this day, and which are redolent of old-world India and its romance. The murders over the Lahore Gateway must have made the court party furiously to think. Something, chance or else the plotting of some supreme brain, had involved those who toyed and trifled with rebellion beyond all extrication. Nothing remained now but for the Royal, nay the Imperial family, to top the wave with such acumen and courage as they might. The aged King had little to look for in this world. The imprisonment and death in Burma, had he seen it, could have little fears for him—but the princes ? Did they dream of that scene at the *kotwali*, where Hodson was to fling their corpses to lie in merited dishonour ? Did Zeenat Mahal the youngest wife, and Jiwan Bakht her spoiled son, feel the ignominy of failure ahead ? We may be certain that their feelings were more than mixed when the litters, sent in answer to Douglas's summons, came back with the report, ' Too late ! ' But raw red blood and cruel murder were no new sight to the rose-red granite walls of the fortress-palace, and the scenes of slaughter on that day, within its walls, and again when a few days later half a hundred nondescript Christian pitifuls were despatched, were of little account on the accumulated negatives of Time.

So came the mutiny pell-mell to the Imperial Palace in the rising heat of a May morning fifty-six years ago. So died the captain of the guard in his own gatehouse with his guests and his colleagues, while over in the cantonments and at the mainguard by the Kashmir Gate the drama grew in intensity. The rest of the story is an evergreen memory, but folk are apt to forget the long dreary spinning of Time on its rosary through the heat and the dust of that day. By ten of the morning, the English dead lay neglected in the Lahore Gateway, but it was not till 4 P.M. that Willoughby blew up the magazine as a protest and as a promise. It was not till nightfall that the last of the English left the cantonments to the sullen remnants of the mutinous regiments. From 10 A.M. till the destruction of the magazine at 4 P.M. our people had been collecting in the mainguard or the flagstaff tower, that still

stands on the ridge, waiting with their dead, ever waiting, for the white troops to come from Meerut.

Let the visitors whose hired carriages rumble through the Lahore Gateway think of the scene enacted there that far-away morning, and then, as they pass on to the marble apartments over the *Zer Jharoka* over the Jumna shore, think again of the mutinous grey-clad troopers, below the very tower that the guide will tell them the King of the English sat on to see his million peoples in the year of grace 1911. In India, history is made so fast. The great Durbar is already ancient history ; Lord Kitchener and Lord Curzon are almost solar myths. Let them forget these if they like, but let them ever remember the captain of the guard and his companions, because in that great task of raising India from where she had fallen, we may again have to face a storm, possibly of greater, possibly of less, dimensions than that of '57. Since the multitudes pressed their foreheads on the steps of King George's dais, King George's delegate has been bombed within sight of that old Lahore Gate. All the old evil is still at work, to embitter and to ruin the slow work of building up a flourishing people from the war-racked ruins of ancient races. Once again may we have to stand four-square to the devil's wind, amid tumult and calumny. It is the avowed intention of the Indian fanatics that '57 shall not be buried in oblivion, as we would have buried it. So we may well use the memory to our own warning. Clumsy we are to handle a strange people, but straight and honest and just according to our lights.

And over the red granite walls of that ancient evil palace and fort rise the great masts of the 'Wireless' that show to the wise that, after all, the English are still there. As a sign that still, as ran the call of the old town crier,

'Mankind belongs to God,
and the land to the Government,
and power to the powerful *sahibs*.'

G. F. MACMUNN.

THE EMPTY BERTH.

SHIPLEY, when, with a hundred and seventy-two other Hellenic travellers, he came on board the *Cruising Castle* at Marseilles, was shown his state-room and told by the steward, ' You 'll be alone here, sir. The gentleman, Mr. Cottar, that was to have had the top berth, died suddenly three days ago.'

Shipley thought, ' Oh, poor chap.' He was sorry for the man who had meant to spend his Easter holidays seeing Greece and hadn't brought it off. Having for the last two months seen his name, ' H. Cottar,' coupled with his own (State-room 93) in the printed passenger-lists of the *Castle's* April cruise, he had sometimes speculated with a little mild interest on his size, temper, age, and habits. In a cabin six feet square, containing two beds, these things are not unimportant. He hadn't known anything at all about H. Cottar. He had wondered if he was another schoolmaster, and had rather hoped he was. One gets to feel at home with other schoolmasters, when one has been one for five years or so.

Shipley had every reason to feel at home on this voyage. There were three other masters, including the head, from his own school, and from the other schools several dozens. There were also deans, canons, and many other Broad-Church clergymen with their families (the clergy needed to be a little Broad—or is it Low?—because the *Cruising Castle* left Marseilles on the Thursday before Easter Day and one understands that this is not done by the High). Besides all these, there were numerous representatives of our universities, both dons and undergraduates; a few colonels, fewer merchants, many intelligent ladies; some less intelligent ladies; several comfortable matrons who chaperoned daughters and believed what their husbands told them about Greece; many cheery girls who were prepared to take Greece all in the day's work, but for whom the point of the cruise was the dancing on deck in the evenings and the cheerful social holiday life, with generous meals and cricket and deck sports to fill up the intervals; numerous writers of books on ancient Greece; novelists, poets and such; and, in fact, many others. They had all left Charing Cross on Tuesday morning, and were now settling themselves and their luggage on the *Cruising Castle* in Marseilles harbour. Some of the passengers had just returned on the *Castle* from a trip to the West Indies, and were

starting straight off again to Greece ; these are they who never leave the *Castle* ; theirs is a restless but interesting life ; they are often retired colonels.

Shipley had been to Greece the spring before. He was going again because the tour this year was rather different, and because he wanted to improve his classical knowledge, and because he was an intelligent young public-school master, and they do go to Greece, and because his headmaster and family were going, and he liked very much his headmaster's daughter, who was a nice girl.

He stowed away his bag under his berth, and sat down to change his boots for deck shoes. After all, though one was of course sorry about H. Cottar, it did leave more room. . . . What rot, he wasn't sorry a bit ; why should he be, never having known H. Cottar ? He was rather glad. This thought jumped clean and unwrapped from the bottom of his mind to the top, as if some one had pressed a spring, just as he finished lacing his shoes. It was as if some one, more direct than he—perhaps a child, with a child's cheerfully frank brutality—had put his decently veiled and perfectly natural and excusable feeling suddenly into plain words for him. Why pretend ? There *was* more room. Yet it wasn't like Shipley to have said it, even to himself.

He went on deck, to find his friends and see the receding view of France.

He joined Miss Steele, his head's daughter. She was cheerful, pretty, fair-haired, companionable, pleasant, and neither clever nor stupid ; in short, a nice girl. (This has been said above, but there is no more fitting phrase to describe her.) She had her camera, and was taking Marseilles. Shipley got his out, and took Marseilles too. That is the worst of having brought a camera ; you must use it. (You may even join the Camera Club.)

'I want to get *Notre Dame de la Garde* too,' said Miss Steele, having got the harbour. She got it, then put up her camera.

'Have you met your cabin companion yet ?' she asked Shipley.

Shipley said, 'He died, poor chap, just before we started. So I haven't one.'

'Oh, I see. . . .' Death was rather a sudden intrusion into the pleasant atmosphere. Dorothy left it alone, and said, 'Father's downstairs, making up our table.' It was already arranged that Shipley (and, indeed, his two colleagues) were to be 'made up' in the same table as the Steeles.

They watched France recede, then went downstairs to dress

for dinner. Shipley had his cabin quite to himself for this ; an observation he made to himself as he dressed, and which may seem a truism, but somehow was not. Perhaps he hadn't got enough used to the knowledge that there was no H. Cottar, not to have a subconscious fancy that he might at any moment walk in ; in fact, he found himself, as he left his state-room at the sound of the gong, thinking of H. Cottar that if he meant to dress he would be very late for dinner, and then, still more oddly, came the idea that perhaps H. Cottar didn't mean to dress at all, didn't care about dressing. He caught himself out of this absent-minded foolishness as he entered the dining-saloon, and made for the table in the corner where the Steeles already sat, together with the two other masters and three ladies and a dean, all friends. Shipley sat next to Dorothy Steele. They talked about when they would pass Corsica and Sardinia and through the Straits of Messina. They wondered whether it would go on being fine. They discussed the passenger-list, lectures, deck-billiards, and Mount Athos, and whether they would rather visit Ephesus or Crete. The Steeles preferred Ephesus, and Shipley Crete. Shipley was very happy, in his civilised, moderate way. All at his table were civilised, moderate people, with a very proper appreciation of interesting sights and scenes, and enough knowledge really to care for the right things in the right way. People who go on Hellenic cruises are mostly rather civilised ; but not all. Some are crude, and know little, and say things that amuse the rest ; which is, after all, a function. There was a family like that at the next table to the Steeles. The father might be better called a pater-familias ; the mother was a stout and cheery lady ; the daughter about eighteen, and full of solemn-eyed joy, the son twelve, red-headed and noisy. He and his sister kicked one another under the table from time to time, and their mother said 'Now, children !' Reference to the dining-saloon plan after dinner revealed to Shipley that they were Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Brown, Miss Nancy Brown, and Master Robert Brown. Vulgar people, obviously ; their voices in speaking gave them hopelessly away. Mr. Brown was the sort of person to whom other people attribute sayings—more characteristic sayings than anyone really says ; such as that he for his part didn't find Athens a patch on Blackpool. Perhaps it is justifiable, if people look as if they would say a thing, to relate it as having actually passed their lips.

That evening Shipley and Miss Steele, sitting on deck, found themselves close to the Brown family, who were looking for islands.

(Of course better-educated people knew that there would be no islands for a long time.) Miss Nancy Brown was obviously, in her untaught and ignorant way, an enthusiast. She seemed tremendously keen. Shipley and Miss Steele listened with some amusement to her naive comments.

'What funny specimens do come to Greece,' Miss Steele observed afterwards. 'It's rather sweet of them to want to, I think.'

At nine o'clock Dr. Steele lectured on Thermopylae. After the lecture Shipley went to bed. H. Cottar, he thought as he lay down, would, had he not been dead, have come in noisily about midnight and woken him from his first sleep. Poor H. Cottar!

As a matter of fact Shipley did wake about midnight, just as if H. Cottar hadn't been dead at all, but had come stumbling in. He lay awake and began to think about H. Cottar dreamily. He supposed they would probably have talked a little while H. Cottar undressed. They would have exchanged comments on people and things and countries. H. Cottar might perhaps have remarked that it seemed absurd to waste time in bed; he meant to get up at dawn next day and have a look. . . . An energetic person, Shipley imagined him. Then he must have dropped asleep again and dreamed, for he imagined quite a long (and rather odd) conversation. He thought he asked 'Were you at the lecture to-night?' and H. Cottar laughed and said 'I was there the first five minutes. Then I sneaked out. I was bored.' Shipley too had been a little bored, but hadn't liked to sneak out.

'The trite touch,' H. Cottar added. 'Whole family a little afflicted with the same complaint, aren't they? Besides, he made two mistakes in three minutes. Didn't you spot that?' Shipley had only spotted one of them. He thought H. Cottar rude and in bad form.

'So I went on deck and played hide-and-seek with the Browns,' went on H. Cottar.

'Those bounders,' exclaimed Shipley, also rude and in bad form; however, they were both in a dream.

'Those bounders,' H. Cottar assented, tranquilly. 'I like them. They're the genuine thing, you know.'

The implied comparison annoyed Shipley. So did the placid self-confidence of this young man's tastes. He ended the conversation by withdrawing into the darker depths where dreams cannot follow.

He woke next morning with the words still echoing in his head.

'The trite touch. . . . Those bounders. . . . I like them. They're the genuine thing, you know.'

He remembered as he dressed that H. Cottar had said in the dream that he meant to be up at dawn, and waste no time. 'I suppose it was he, then, that was making that row overhead at six, running up and down,' said Shipley, foolishly, mixing up dream and waking, death and life, in an inconsequent way that wasn't like him. He even wasted a moment in being glad that H. Cottar was up and dressed; he was feeling irritated with him for his crude and tasteless comments on the Steele family.

He went in to breakfast. Close to him the two young Browns were chattering about how they had seen the sun rise, and Corsica under the dawn, and had then played hopscotch and run races round the deck. That, Shipley supposed, was the noise that had disturbed him at six. They had seen a school of porpoises, too, jumping at the sunrise like happy pigs.

'We plugged into them with pennies,' said Master Brown. 'Nancy got one slap in the middle.'

'My dears, how wasteful and unkind,' said Mrs. Brown. 'You're just as silly as two babies—aren't they, Papa?'

Papa said, 'Let them enjoy themselves, Mama. We're out for a holiday, aren't we? Can't pore over our Greek books all day when we're young—can we, Nance?'

'We mustn't forget what day it is, though,' said Mama.

It was, of course, Good Friday. To Shipley and the Steeles and most of the *Cruising Castle* passengers that meant going to Morning Service in the saloon. To Miss Nancy Brown it meant, apparently, making a hearty breakfast off dry bread. Shipley, who could not help noticing this, deduced, with a little shock at the unexpectedness, that she was what he called High Church. Most of the Hellenic cruisers weren't, particularly, and on the hilarious spirits of a Brown it sat oddly.

Shipley and most other people went to Matins, taken by a dean in the saloon at eleven; a sober, stuffy, placid service, upholstered in red velvet and ever so gently swaying, and holding no elements of tragedy, and with a brief sermon on the decay of Corinth. When Shipley came up from it, he saw on deck those who hadn't attended it. Among them was Miss Nancy Brown. She stood alone, looking out to sea, her chin in her hands, looking at the porpoises that frolicked in the sea, happy and fat; but somehow Shipley knew that she wasn't thinking about them. If he had been a little

nearer he might have caught the glint of a tear on her rather thick black eyelashes, and from it he might have deduced in her an attitude towards Good Friday that lacked well-bred restraint. To Shipley it was a day to be taken quietly, indeed, but temperately. Miss Brown appeared to begin it by hopscotch and wild running on the deck at dawn, go on to a dry-bread breakfast, and spend the time when other people were at Service in winking away tears as she watched porpoises at play. A simple, emotional, very young and crude person, probably. Shipley went to look for Miss Steele, who was in a deck chair reading the 'Proceedings of the Hellenic Travellers' Club' for the last year. She had it open at last Good Friday's sermon, which had been about the self-sacrifice of the best architecture as instanced in the Acropolis buildings. Shipley sat down by her and her friend. Their cultured reticence of religious feeling was much more congenial to him than the theatricality of the less educated classes. They began to talk ; and, cutting suddenly through the pleasant, young, well-bred chatter, came a profound and unrestrained yawn. It wasn't Shipley's yawn, nor Miss Steele's, nor her friend's, and no one else was near. Shipley glanced at the girls to see if they had heard it, but they showed no sign of having done so. So perhaps he hadn't heard it either ; perhaps he had only imagined it. The only thing he heard at the moment was Miss Brown's ringing voice lifted in admiration twenty yards away, 'I *never* saw anything so jolly blue !' Apparently she had recovered her ordinary spirits again. He saw her going off next moment with her young brother to play cricket.

'I shouldn't have thought they would, to-day,' said Dorothy Steele's friend ; but Dorothy said kindly, 'Oh, if they like to——' Dorothy very seldom criticised ; she was a remarkably nicely bred girl, Shipley found himself commenting. He meant to ask her to marry him some time ; only not early in the cruise, because if she refused him, which he thought she probably would, it would spoil the rest of the time for both of them. He would wait till the homeward voyage.

Lying awake in bed that night, he quite decided this. Two days ago he had meant to ask her before they reached Greece ; but after all that would be a silly plan.

'Oh Lord,' groaned H. Cottar from the berth above. 'I suppose either you want the girl or you don't. And either she wants to have you or she doesn't. You don't mean to say you don't know which, you silly ass ? Besides, why should it spoil anything,

a plain question and a plain no ? You're both too beastly self-conscious—that's what's the matter. Why not ask her now, and then again on the journey back ? In fact, every evening after dinner ? Nothing like regularity in these things ; it breaks down the strongest resolution. But—excuse my asking—what the dickens do you *want* her for, my dear man ?'

'It's nothing to do with you,' said Shipley, stiffly. 'But I happen to be—to care for her.'

A hilarious chuckle jarred him. 'But I asked you *why* ? Because she's pretty ? Because she's polite ? Because she always says the thing you expect ? Because she's a Nice Girl ? Oh, my dear good chap !'

Shipley, in his imaginary conversations with H. Cottar, always made him out this sort of offensive person. He realised the unfairness of it, and the inevitability. And, with the offensiveness, there was a sort of buoyant vitality, a confident joy and good-fellowship, and somehow an ability that he, trained by his profession in discerning ability, recognised in H. Cottar, which made it impossible to dismiss him as a tiresome bounder. Not once but many times during the next few days H. Cottar casually and carelessly set him right on some doubtful point of classical or geographical knowledge ; and the queer thing was that he always afterwards discovered this information of H. Cottar's to be correct. This threw an odd light on the subconscious self ; somewhere, obviously, he must have more knowledge stored than he knew of, and it rose in this strange way and erupted into his conscious thought as if from his imaginary companion's lips. Shipley began to have a great respect for H. Cottar's brain. His judgments had a swift, compelling sureness, a clean freshness, as if they came straight from the fountain-head, not, like most people's, at second-hand. To Shipley, with his acquired erudition set in order in his sound and careful brain, this flashing as of genius was something unfamiliar and rather stimulating. By the time they got to their first landing-place in Greece, his outlook on Greece (and on other things) was somehow altered, freshened, as if by contact with a brilliant child.

On the first morning in Greece, riding a mule up the hot stone path that winds up Ithome, breathing in the aromatic air of the hillside, and seeing the asphodel and poppies and scarlet anemones waving by the path's edge, and the big tortoises crawling hot-shelled in the sun, he found himself near Miss Nancy Brown. She was laughing, wide-eyed, for the joy of Greece ; and in her com-

panionship Shipley felt a sudden familiarity. Somehow it was rather like H. Cottar's, only H. Cottar knew a good deal and Miss Brown knew nothing. But she knew she liked Greece, and she knew she wanted to catch and keep a tortoise, till her brother Bobby told her that tortoises were sick at sea, and that once a man took a tortoise on board in his pocket, and . . . So she gave up the tortoise idea.

At the place where steeds had to be abandoned by those who meant to push to the top of the mountain, Mr. and Mrs. Brown and their children parted ways.

'The level way to the Arcadian Gate for mother and me,' said Mr. Brown, mopping his forehead. (The Arcadian Gate was where they lunched.) 'You'd better come along with us, Nance.'

But Nance thought not. 'Of course Bobby and I are going to the top,' she said, and started off with vigour. It was a steep and long scramble and a hot noon, and several strong men fainted by the way and lay under trees and had first aid. The Browns did not. They scarcely seemed out of breath. The Steeles got distinctly weary, but conscientiously climbed on. Shipley, too, climbed on, in grim determination. When they got to the top, the Browns ran all the way down at full speed. They were enjoying themselves. Shipley did not see them again till, on the homeward way, he encountered them in a monastery courtyard, drinking tar-flavoured wine and eating Turkish delight and talking to the monks on their fingers. They passed the glass they had half-emptied to Shipley and the Steeles. Miss Steele refused it, in her pleasant, courteous way. Probably she didn't drink from other people's glasses. Shipley took it and drank. He gave it back, not emptied, to Miss Brown, who held it out again, as if there had been some one else, at her other side, to take it and drink too. Then she drew back her hand, recollecting herself, and divided what was left between herself and Bobby. Shipley had an odd feeling of some jolly fellowship that was being sacramented; a fellowship not only of him and the Browns, not chiefly, even . . .

The marvellous days and nights slid by. They went to Acro-Corinth, and Athens, and Tempe, and Delos. Delos not being, it was long since known, of the earth, is presumably a projection of heaven. On Delos, if anywhere, men may find their souls. People have stayed behind on Delos, and counted the world well lost. Even Mrs. Brown, who had the night before announced herself weary of old stones, chased up the hillside to the sacred grotto and

called pantingly, 'Nancy, Nancy, come and see the place where Apollo lived!' Nancy herself moved pale and wide-eyed as in a dream through empty city streets, between roofless villas full of lizards and poppies and silence and the sun. Shipley, standing by the shining sacred lake and listening to the whispering of the sedges there, knew for the first time since early childhood the beauty and the youth of the ageless world; newly for him the divine brother and sister were born on the lake shores, and he knew that they lived for always. For him they had passed out of the sphere of mythology, where they had been confined last time he came to Delos, and had become a living reality. He saw the world and its radiance with new eyes; eyes other than his own. He took off his hat as he stood, as if to salute something—perhaps Apollo and Artemis, or merely all the radiant youth of the live world. . . .

At dinner he saw that Nancy Brown was still pale, and her eyes danced like stars. Delos had been almost too exciting for her. She had had a bathe there, too, and was perhaps tired. Shipley heard her mother ask her, 'Did you bathe alone, Nance, or was anyone with you?'

'Yes, there was——' the girl began, absently; then Shipley saw her face change, as if she was coming out of a dream. 'No, I was alone,' she said, and her voice showed her surprised at the realisation.

Miss Steele asked him something about Paros; or perhaps Naxos. . . .

Greece, even more than most things, must end; Hellenic travellers are here to-day and gone to-morrow. In seventeen days from the day they left Marseilles they were approaching it again. It was Sunday night, and they would land next morning. Shipley had travelled a long way from the time when he had decided to propose to Miss Steele on the homeward voyage. He no longer had the least desire to do that. In case anyone thinks that he proposed instead to Miss Brown, I hasten to add that he did not. He did, indeed, talk to her a little on the last night. He found her alone on deck at one end of the ship, while Evening Service (with a sermon from one of the canons on the glory that was Greece) was being conducted under an awning at the other. The strains of 'Lead, kindly Light,' floated musically down to them.

Shipley said, 'So it's over,' and she nodded, turning her pale face and shining wide eyes on him in the starlight.

'It's been . . . jolly,' she said.

Shipley deliberately put her to the test, to prove what he practically knew. For he had long known how H. Cottar spent his days ; the nights had been his, Shipley's, but the days some one else's.

'Getting to know new and interesting people *is* rather jolly,' he said.

She turned again and looked at him.

'That's just it,' she said. 'Have *you*, too ?'

'He was my cabin-mate. We've talked every night,' said Shipley simply.

Her startled eyes widened.

'Oh . . . do you mean . . . *what* do you mean ?' she breathed.

Shipley said, dropping his voice a little, 'The same as you. . . . One can't explain. It just *is* so. . . . He died, you know, before we started. . . . He was to have come.'

'But he *has* come,' she whispered, laughing. 'He wasn't to be done out of Greece, was he ? . . . But why . . . why have *I* got to know him so frightfully well ? Why should it have been me ? I never met him when—when he was alive.'

'I suppose he liked you,' said Shipley, inadequately and baldly. 'Yes ; he told me he did, you know.'

'Oh.' She caught her breath sharply. 'And he's shown me Greece, and . . . everything. . . .'

'He's shown me life,' said Shipley.

Suddenly the girl's head fell on to her arms, and she gave a stifled sob.

'I *want* him,' she whispered, and the longing in her voice cut Shipley's heart like a knife. 'Oh, I *want* him. And after to-morrow I shall never talk to him again. . . .'

'You can't tell,' returned Shipley, fumbling for comfort.

But she could. 'Oh, I know. He was let to come to Greece because he wanted to so ; but now he's done with it all ; he'll have to move on. . . . And the way I've known him hasn't been enough to . . . to let us go on being together. Don't you see ?'

Shipley saw. But he saw too that the way she had known him had been enough to make, for the time, any other intimate companionship unthinkable. He merely said, 'He'd want to make your life *more* jolly, you know, not less,' and she agreed to that.

'He does ; he has ; he will. He's shown me so many new things. It *is* more jolly.' She lifted her face gallantly to the stars, with a little pathetic quiver of the lips.

A stout shadow loomed up from the background, and Mrs. Brown's motherly voice called, 'Nancy, Nancy, you must really have a shawl, my pet!'

Nancy came back with a little shiver to the world of shawls. She turned to go; but first held out her hand to Shipley with a little tearful glimmering smile. He took it and held it for a moment in a companionable clasp.

'We both know him,' she whispered. 'Isn't it jolly for us?'

'Very jolly,' said Shipley, smiling down at her.

But afterwards he wondered as he packed, was that quite what it was? Is it very jolly to have your whole view of life turned upside down, so that what before seemed desirable becomes flat and unprofitable?

'Yes, I think it is,' he decided at last. For, whatever he had lost through the odd influence that had so subverted his standards, the vividness of colour, the radiance, the young exuberance, the clear, clean vision of life it had left with him, was really very jolly indeed.

'Many thanks, old man; and goodbye,' he said aloud, as he turned off the light; and he could have sworn he saw through the darkness H. Cottar's cheerful smile.

ROSE MACAULAY.

FANNY BURNEY AT NORBURY PARK.

BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

THESE brief notes are penned at Norbury House, the 'dear Norbury' where and in its neighbourhood some of the happiest years of Fanny Burney's life were spent. The mansion stands on a richly wooded crest facing Box Hill in the near distance. In later time the peerless countryside homed a novelist greater even than the author of '*Evelina*.' For many years George Meredith lived in a cottage on a grassy slope of Box Hill within half an hour's drive in his pony-cart of Norbury, a convenient proximity that invited frequent visits.

Writing from Norbury Park on November 9, 1784, Fanny Burney says :

' This sweet place is beautiful even yet though no longer of a beauty young and blooming such as you left it. But the character of the prospect is so grand that winter cannot annihilate its charms, though it greatly diminishes them. The variety of the grounds and the striking form of the hills always afford something new to observe and retain something lasting to admire.'

In this same month she writes to her father :

' Winter here does not sweep away all beauty though it deducts much from its character of smiling gaiety. But the bold and majestic form of the surrounding hills and the thick mass of the noble though leafless wood still, and throughout the whole varying year, afford objects sufficiently diversified to engage though not fully delight attention. Every fresh gleam of light from every fresh breaking of a passing cloud so changes the point of view and so metamorphoses the principal object from the hill to the vale, and from the wood to plain, that much as summer is everywhere to be regretted winter here has a thousand claims to being admired.'

In another letter of this same year she records : ' Arrived at dear Norbury Park. . . . They will not let me go whilst I can stay and I am now most willing to stay till I *must* go.' The tradition of hospitality and its effect upon the mind of the guest of a hundred and twenty-nine years ago are fully maintained at Norbury Park to-day. *Experientia docet.*

Fanny Burney's host was Mr. Lock, a man whose sympathies were as wide as, happily, his purse was full. There is a portrait of him in the Burney Parlour at Camilla Lacey, a comparatively modern residence that enshrines what is left of the little cottage built out of the profits of 'Camilla,' where Fanny Burney, become Madame D'Arblay, settled with her husband. For so kindly natured a man, one whose works long 'did follow him,' the expression of the face, notably the eyes, is curiously sad. Strangely enough the portrait, a drawing after a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, has strong points of resemblance to an engraving of a portrait of Robespierre I bought years ago on the Quai at Paris. This is probably in some measure due to the circumstance that in the contemporary cases abundant hair is trimmed in the same fashion.

Among other things that keep Mr. Lock's memory green at Norbury House is what is known as the Picture Room. This, serving as a larger drawing-room, looks out on Box Hill across a richly wooded valley. Gilpin, an artist who had his share in producing the unique effect, writes :

'The walls of the room are painted to represent a bower or arbour admitting a fictitious sky through a large oval at the top. It is covered at the angles with trellis work interwoven with honeysuckle, vines, and clustering grapes. The sides of the room are divided by light painted pilasters appearing to support the trellis roof and open to four views. That towards the south is real, the other three are artificial. When the natural hour corresponds with the hour represented, there is a coincidence of artificial and natural light and all the landscapes both within and without the room appear to be illumined by the same sun.'

In the autumn of 1792, at a time when Paris, on the eve of making swift end of King and Queen, gave herself up to the mad joys of Revolution, the immediate neighbourhood of Norbury Park was the scene of a French invasion that, incidentally, had momentous influence upon the life of the unsuspecting Fanny Burney. A colony of *émigrés aristocrats* fleeing from the guillotine by strange chance became tenants of Juniper Hall, a roomy red brick house standing at the foot of Norbury Park between the villages of Mickleham and Burford Bridge. How they discovered this remote valley in Surrey, through which the river Mole sometimes turbulently flows and whiles lies stagnant a narrow stream between muddy banks, is a problem as obscure as why their new home should be called Juniper Hall. As far as the latter was

concerned, the French, in accordance with their patriotic fashion, straightway changed the spelling and the pronunciation, translating it to *Junipère*. If it were only by reason of the identity of two of the tenants the gathering would have been notable. One was Talleyrand, the other Madame de Staël, who, when little Fanny Burney appeared on the scene, opened wide her arms and took her to her heart.

We are familiar with Talleyrand in the terrible old man, lean in body, wizened in face, whom Maclise years later saw and sketched. In a portrait preserved at Camilla Lacey we look upon an almost plump, finely dressed personage in the plenitude of his physical and intellectual power and the enjoyment of his thirty-eighth year.

Among others of this pathetic company suddenly exchanging the splendours of ancestral homes and princely rent-rolls for the stolid homestead of *Junipère* and the penury necessitated by incomes pinched almost to the vanishing-point, were Narbonne, Lally-Tollendal, Malouet, Girardin, and General D'Arblay, sometime adjutant to Lafayette, of whom more anon. In a neighbouring cottage lived Madame de Broglie, daughter-in-law of a Maréchal in the French Army who had served with the royal Princes. Escaping from Paris, she crossed the Channel in an open boat with a little son in his teens. She was not alone, there being several others crammed into the cottage whose ground-floor consisted of a parlour and a kitchen. They were happily near enough to share the company of their fellow-victims of the Terror housed in roomier quarters at *Junipère*. Here in the direst circumstances were maintained that lightheartedness and perfection of ceremonial grace in manner and speech that distinguished old friends who awaited in Paris prisons their turn to be called to the guillotine.

Fanny Burney was straightway admitted to this charmed circle on terms of affectionate intimacy. The accompanying rest, mental and physical, fortuitously arrived close upon her emancipation from Windsor, her deliverance from the chill presence of Queen Charlotte and the occasionally embarrassing personal attention of fatuous King George. Macaulay has described in unforgettable terms the nature of her gilded servitude.

'A slavery of five years, of five years taken from the best part of life and wasted in menial drudgery under galling conditions and amidst unfriendly and uninteresting companions. . . . Weak, feverish, hardly able to stand, Frances had still to rise before seven in order to dress the sweet Queen and to sit up till midnight in order

to undress the sweet Queen. The established doctrine of the Court was that all sickness was to be considered as a pretence until it proved fatal. The only way in which the invalid could clear herself of malingering, as it is called in the army, was to go on lacing and unlacing till she fell down dead at the royal feet.'

The fact that we owe the essay on 'The Diary of Madame D'Arblay,' from which this passage is quoted, to personal animosity on the part of its writer, adds to rather than diminishes the zest with which it is read at this day. Croker had contributed to the 'Quarterly' a review of the many volumes in which the author of 'Evelina' preserved recollections of her father and of the greater part of her own life. In the course of it he was at pains to enlarge upon a purely fictitious charge brought against Fanny Burney, obviously founded upon misapprehension. In the preface to 'Evelina' it was stated that the narrative embodied the experiences of a maiden of seventeen. Out of this grew the story that the authoress had fraudulently attempted to mollify the possibly austere judgment of the public by representing herself as being of this interesting age.

It was a small matter of which Croker with characteristic malignant pettiness made much. Macaulay despised Croker with a touch of hatred that found its parallel in Disraeli's attitude towards the same prominent personage. In the 'Edinburgh' he replied to Croker in the 'Quarterly.' One can imagine with what delight he on an early page worked-in the following passage :

' There was no want of low minds and bad hearts in the generation which witnessed her first appearance. There was the envious Kenrick and the savage Wolcot, the asp George Steevens and the polecat John Williams. It did not, however, occur to them to search the parish register of Lynn in order that they might be able to twit a lady with having concealed her age. That truly chivalrous action was reserved for a bad writer of our own time, whose spite she had provoked by not furnishing him with materials for a worthless edition of Boswell's 'Life of Johnson,' some sheets of which our readers have doubtless seen round parcels of better books.'

In spite of sad memories connected with her sojourn at Court, Fanny Burney to the last preserved affectionate regard for the personage whom, to Macaulay's infinite scorn, she always alluded to as 'the sweet Queen.' When at last, almost literally worn to death, she reluctantly retired from the Court, Her Majesty bestowed upon

what was left of her frail servitor a yearly pension of 100*l.* When marriage with M. D'Arblay was conditionally arranged Fanny in fear and trembling approached her royal mistress with humble supplication for consent. She seemed to have instinctive apprehension that the Sweet One, affecting disapproval, might seize the opportunity of relieving her purse of this charge. Her delight was unbounded when she was dismissed from the interview with a blessing and in continued enjoyment of her pitiful pension.

When 'Camilla' was published, a period which marked the height of her popularity, her first impulse, diffidently carried out, was to lay at the feet of her old mistress and the King early copies of the book beautifully bound. During her reception in the Queen's dressing-room, the King, as usual flustering round with irritating 'What? what?' entered, overwhelming her with questions for which he did not always await answers. One remark he made was sensible and to the point. Inquiring who had corrected the proofs of 'Camilla,' the quivering author timidly answered 'Only myself.' 'Why,' cried the King, genuinely delighted at last to have something sensible to say, 'some authors have told me they are the last to do that work for themselves. They know so well by heart what ought to be that they run on without seeing what is. They have told me besides that a mere plodding head is best and surest for that work and that the livelier the imagination the less it should be trusted to.'

This remark is so shrewd and far-seeing that one is disposed to doubt whether King George actually hit upon it, or whether Fanny Burney, out of her great possessions, did not generously, perhaps unwittingly, attribute it to him. A short time ago I was privileged to address a company of Readers for the Press gathered under the auspices of that excellent institution, the Printers' Pension Committee. I had not when I spoke re-read for the purposes of this article 'Madame D'Arblay's Diary,' or I would have cited the passage as illuminating the priceless services of the printer's reader to the mere writer. Utilising *l'esprit d'escalier* I quote it now.

There was an unexpectedly pleasing close to this revisiting of a familiar scene. Fanny Burney took with her two sets of 'Camilla,' one for the King, the other for the Queen. On the following day, having been invited to dine with the successor of the terrible Madame Schwellenberg, the Queen's chief woman in attendance whilst poor Fanny was in slavery, a packet was put into her hands with the intimation that it came from the Queen. On opening it, it was found to contain one hundred guineas. It was really the

King who should be credited with this pleasant surprise. After Fanny withdrew from the royal interview he hustled into the Queen's dressing-room, put fifty guineas into her hands with the remark, 'This is for my set.' The Queen could do nothing less than follow his example, and from this extraneous source the author of 'Camilla' drew a sum far in excess of what the publishers had paid for 'Evelina.'

From the first M. D'Arblay paid Fanny Burney attention exceeding in warmth the general reception that brightened her visits to Junipère. Early in their acquaintance he volunteered to correct her French pronunciation, a dangerous undertaking. In one of her letters home the pupil writes: 'M. D'Arblay is one of the most singularly interesting characters that can ever have been formed. He has a sincerity, a frankness and ingenuous openness of nature I had been unjust enough to think could not belong to a Frenchman.' Dr. Burney was not so warmly appreciative, for some time opposing the marriage. Nor did Macaulay when he came to deal with the bridegroom display enthusiastic regard. He sketches him in a sentence free from eulogy. 'With M. de Narbonne,' he writes, 'was his friend and follower, General D'Arblay, an honourable and amiable man with a handsome person, frank soldier-like manners, and some taste for letters.'

A natural objection in the prudent father's eyes was absolute lack of means on the part of the proposed bridegroom. D'Arblay's particular friend in the community at Junipère was M. Narbonne, who like the rest lost all his possessions in anarchy-ridden France. With a generosity that recalls the yet-unborn Mr. Micawber in loftiest mood, he insisted on sharing with his friend what was left. 'Quoique ce soit,' he said with a limpid tear in his eye, 'nous le partagerons ensemble.' As 'whatever it be' was, to the common knowledge of the two, actually nothing at all, Fanny Burney commenced her married life with her royal pension of 100*l.* a year as sole resource.

However, love in its new-born ecstasy laughs at contingent butcher's bills. On July 29, 1793, the French *émigré* and Fanny Burney were married at Mickleham Church. Mr. Leverton Harris, remembered in the House of Commons as Member for Stepney in one of the quick-change parliaments that marked the mid-career of Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister, has collected and enshrined in his Surrey home on the skirts of Norbury Park a rich and rare collection of relics connected with the author of 'Evelina.' Among them are the original marriage-lines, to which are set the signatures of bride and bridegroom, attesting witnesses being Mr. Lock, the

bountiful host of Norbury House, and James Burney, the bride's cousin. Her father, whilst not able to prevent the marriage, diplomatically absented himself from the ceremony.

The young couple began their married life in apartments in a farmhouse on the summit of Bagden Hill. Thence they moved to a somewhat larger cottage at Bookham. Finally, when 'Camilla' proved a financial success, they built themselves a house on the outskirts of Norbury Park, known during their residence as 'Camilla Cottage.' From the first M. D'Arblay, conscious of inadequacy to bear his fair share in the wherewithal for meeting the cost of the little household, developed a fearsome frenzy for gardening. Pursuit of the vocation involved him in delightfully ludicrous dilemmas. Writing under date April 1794 from the cottage at Bookham the young wife says: 'Think of our horticultural shock last week when Mrs. Bailey, our landlady, entreated him not to spoil her fruit trees—trees he had been pruning with his utmost skill and strength.'

A picture of him drawn for the admiration of her father presents him 'mowing down our hedge with his sabre with air and attitudes so military that had he been hewing down other legions than those he encountered—i.e. of spiders—he could scarcely have had a mien more tremendous or have denuded an arm more mighty.'

Neighbouring authorities, looking on with professional jealousy, were accustomed to point out that seeds had been sown where plants should have been bedded out, while plants were running to seed, the irrepressible D'Arblay looking on anxiously wondering when they would come to maturity. He devoted many days' toil, from morn till eve, to planting strawberries round the garden hedge. When he learned that the plants would not bear fruit the first year, he realised the fact that his tenancy would terminate before that time.

Nothing daunted him. His prevailing passion was for transplanting.

'Everything we possess,' his wife wrote, 'he moves from one end of the garden to the other, to produce better effects. Roses take the place of jessamine, jessamines of honeysuckles, and honeysuckles of lilacs, till they have all danced round as far as space allows. Whether the effect may not be a general mortality, Summer only can determine.'

There was a silver lining even to this cloud. For a whole week the indomitable D'Arblay day by day triumphantly marched in

with a cabbage under each arm. 'Oh, you've no idea how sweet they tasted,' the entranced wife wrote to her doubting father. 'We agreed they had a freshness and a *goût* we had never met with before.' Bliss was short-lived. Towards the end of the week the cabbages began to pall on the palate. The devotees were even constrained to admit that like the buds hymned by Cowper they had 'a bitter taste.' On mentioning this to a neighbour it was pointed out that for something like ten days the cabbages had been running to seed.

There came a time when, owing to a regrettable incident, the land had rest for many days. Towards noon, after a morning of furious transplanting, D'Arblay caught sight of a bucket of cold water standing by the pump. He straightway plunged his heated head in it, the shock bringing on dangerous illness that confined him to his room for some weeks. Taking his first walk abroad after convalescence he observed a bed in the garden bristling with weeds of exceptional rankness. *Ciel!* Thus was advantage taken of his temporary withdrawal from the scene of his labours. Throwing off his coat he picked up a spade, and in less than an hour he had levelled the forest of weeds. Mentioning the feat with shy pride to a neighbour who also had a garden, he learned that he had dug up the only bed of asparagus.

Among other touches of vanished hands that crowd the Burney Parlour at Camilla Lacey is a water-colour sketch of the original cottage as it stood when the indomitable D'Arblay, elate at sight of a new garden on which to practise his prized art, brought his bride to her third home. It was of modest dimensions, with the bare look of a house so new that ivy or other rambling green thing had not had time to creep up its walls. What remains of it, including the stuffy little parlour that bears the earliest tenant's name, is absorbed in the inner structure of the roomy mansion known to-day as Camilla Lacey.

Perhaps most precious amongst the miscellaneous relics closely connected with the life and labours of Fanny Burney are the manuscripts of her novels 'Evelina' and 'Camilla.' They are jealously locked up in a mahogany case through whose glass top the outer leaves of the musty, yellow-toned, partly moth-eaten pages may be scanned. It is curious to note that in this original manuscript, which served the purposes of the printer, Fanny Burney's first novel is entitled 'Eveline,' with the sub-title retained, 'A Memoir of a Young Lady in a Series of Letters.' The

story is written in now faded ink on both sides of quarto sheets. Being permitted to make closer inspection of them, one notes that whilst '*Evelina*' was fairly written out with comparatively few emendations, '*Camilla*' is scored heavily with corrections not always involving improvement. This tendency, marking painstaking effort to improve a style originally charming in its simplicity, ended as we know in the hopeless pedantry of literary manner that made almost unreadable her biography of her father.

By the manuscripts is stored a miniature of Fanny adorning the lid of a circular ivory and tortoiseshell snuff-box. This work of art was accomplished before her marriage. Arrangement of the hair suggests the wearing of a wig. It was, of course, merely the way in which ladies dressed their own hair in those far-off days. Another relic interesting as having been in the personal possession of Fanny Burney is a pincushion with her name embroidered on it. Among portraits on the walls are those of Horace Walpole, Garrick, Joshua Reynolds, Sheridan, and Talleyrand already referred to. Whether at her father's house or at Junipère, these folk with deathless names were Fanny's daily acquaintances.

In even closer intimacy, certainly before her second marriage, was Mrs. Thrale, of whom there is a lively portrait. Towards the end of her long life Dr. Johnson's friend, become Mrs. Piozzi, went to reside in Bath, where she maintained something of her former social activity and much of her habitual hospitality. Close by the portrait hangs a framed card on which is written 'Mrs. Piozzi requests the honor' (thus she spelt the word, discarding the 'u' as they do in the United States to-day) 'of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd's company to a concert, ball and supper at nine o'clock on Thursday evening, 27th of January next at the Lower Rooms, Bath, being her eighty-eighth birthday.'

The year was 1820. For a lady in her eighty-eighth year concert, ball, and supper formed a liberal programme.

The indefatigable D'Arblay, spade in hand, was early at work in the garden at Camilla Lacey. Among achievements of which there remain traces was a mound in the front garden on which he built a summer-house. Mr. Leverton Harris tells me that digging about the mound this year there was found a Louis XVI copper coin of the date 1792. Copper coins were the chief currency among the tenants of Junipère. Silver and gold they sorely lacked.

*THE LITTLE TINKER ;
OR,
FREEWILL AND ADOPTION.*

BY JANE H. FINDLATER.

IT was a howling December night. An icy wind, laden with sleet, rushed down the glens ; the whole face of Nature seemed washed with half-frozen tears. Every man and beast that could be under shelter had sought it hours ago, and yet here, trudging along the road, driven before the wind, scoured by the pitiless sleet, came a woman and two young children. To say that they were wet through is not to express their condition at all ; for the water had not only soaked their garments, but was running down off them in streams. And such garments as they were ! The eldest child had on, apparently, nothing but a man's coat—or little else—it was tied round his throat by the sleeves ; while the other boy wore a woman's skirt fastened round his throat and gathered in at the waist with a bit of string. Their small mop-like heads, innocent of hats, had for once received a thorough washing that night ; for the water ran down from their tangled and curly locks, half blinding the poor little things.

The mother was a tall finely made woman. A faded green tartan shawl fell cornerwise from her shoulders almost to her heels, and on her crisply curled yellow hair she wore a knitted woollen cap. She carried a bundle of tin cans that clashed together as the wind beat against them.

This sorry band of wayfarers was the advance-guard of the Reid tribe—a gang of tinkers well known in that district of Scotland. When I say the advance-guard, it becomes necessary to explain why Mary Reid should be struggling alone through the winter's night with her children. The explanation was very simple. The men of the tribe (and really under the circumstances they might perhaps be excused) were all drunk, lying in a heap some way out of the village, their tents and tent sticks, their bundles, their bagpipes, and even their donkey, unregarded beside them. The rain and sleet lashed down upon them and they slept on, having—poor wretches—attained to a Paradise of a sort, where

cold and misery were forgotten for a time. The donkey, with the philosophy of his species, had turned his tail to the storm, and stood there beside his prostrate masters, an image of grotesque endurance.

The two other women of the tribe were begging through the village, secure (in such a storm) of getting food to exist upon the next day. It was no uncommon thing for the Reid men to be thus overtaken, and in ordinary circumstances Mary would have thought nothing of it. But to-night her situation was desperate, for another wholly unnecessary little tinker was just going to be added to the tribe. Her other children had been born under the stars, one of them in July, the other on a warm autumn night; but this was a different matter altogether. Inured as she was to every kind of privation, Mary could not face this. Instinct warned her that she must find some sort of shelter if the tiny flame of the new life was not to be blown out by this icy wind that came roaring down the glens.

She stood by the roadside and looked contemptuously at the men sleeping their heavy sleep out under the storm, and questioned whether it would be possible to waken them up enough to pitch a tent for her. Then, shaking her head, she called to Jockie and Gib to come on. The children had a saving terror of the men when they were drunk, so they needed only an occasional threat to urge them forward through the storm: thus they struggled on in the darkness, having reached, it would appear, almost the lowest ebb of human misery. Some one had given each of the poor little mites a crust, however; and they kept gnawing away at these for consolation. They passed across a bridge, and Mary stood leaning against the stone coping for a minute to rest herself. The burn was in such flood that it sent up a hoarse sound into the night like the shout of a multitude, as it rushed down.

The woman groaned aloud, then gathered up her load of cans and moved on again. In the distance a light glimmered through the darkness—it was the window of the Glen Farm. The question was whether Mary could ever reach the house. For herself, she would gladly have lain down by the dyke-side and taken her chance of life or death; but the blind protective instinct at her heart urged her on: she must attain to shelter before the baby entered this freezing world.

The Glen Farm kitchen was heated to suffocation that bitter night—doors and windows tightly shut—no modern ideas of

ventilation tolerated there for a moment. Macpherson the farmer and his wife sat by the fire and talked on, as only country-people can, about exactly the same subjects they had discussed for months past. Suddenly, without knock or call, the back door flew open, and heralded by a blast of icy wind, two dolorous little figures burst into the warm room.

‘ Mither’s deein’ oot bye ! ’ Jockie screamed, his voice shrill with terror, while Gib just stood there as if paralysed, his small frozen purple toes gripping the warm boards of the floor, water pouring from his rags and collecting in a pool all round him.

Macpherson started up from his seat, and his wife let the knitting fall from her hands.

‘ Gosh me, laddies ! What’s that you’re sayin’ ? ’ she cried. ‘ What’s wrong with yer mither ? ’

‘ I dinna ken,’ Jockie sobbed ; ‘ but she’s deein’.’

‘ Where’s yer faither then ? ’ the mistress asked. She knew the Reid family intimately ; many a ‘ puckle tea ’ she had doled out to them in her day.

‘ Faither’s drunk, east at the village,’ the child replied, as if it were the most natural explanation possible—as indeed it was.

Macpherson went to fetch his lantern, fixed an end of candle in it, and moved to the door.

‘ I’ll see till’t,’ he said over his shoulder to his wife. The blast that met him beyond the shelter of the doorway blew out the lantern, and sturdy as he was the man staggered before its impact. A wild night this, he thought, for even tinkers to be on the road.

‘ Where is she, laddie ? ’ he demanded of Jockie. ‘ The light’ll no’ keep in for the wind—where is she ? ’ It was so dark they could scarcely see a handsbreadth before them, and all round them came the storm pressing and buffeting them like a host of unseen foes.

‘ She’s in by, alongside the cairts,’ Jockie whimpered.

Macpherson felt his way by the wall, passing the closed doors of the byre and the stable where his cows and horses had long been cosily housed from the storm. Then across the yard he groped, Jockie in close attendance, and reached the cart-shed at last.

‘ Hi ! Are ye there, Mary Reid ? ’ he cried into the thick darkness. A groan came from the far end of the shed, but no answer.

Macpherson groped past the carts, and in their shelter got out a box of matches. Then, shielding the flame with his hand, he managed to light the lantern again. Mary Reid had crept to the back of the shed, and lay there on a heap of dried bracken. As the

flickering light fell upon her face, Macpherson could see that it had a strange deathly colour under its tanned skin. The rain from her drenched clothing had soaked even the bracken she lay upon.

‘Eh, wumman, but ye’re wet! It’s an awfu’ night this!’ he exclaimed.

‘I’m waur than wet,’ the poor soul cried. ‘Will the mistress no’ help me till I hae my bairn? I’m gey bad the noo.’

Here indeed was a job for the mistress, as her husband confessed. He was a kindly man, and the desperate plight the woman was in would have touched any heart.

‘Hoot aye, I’ll gang for her in a minit,’ he said, reassurance in his voice. He strode across the yard again and re-entered the kitchen.

‘Yer wantit,’ he said curtly, jerking his thumb across his shoulder in the direction of the barn, and then went on to explain the situation at greater length.

To a certain type of uneducated woman any excitement, even an unpleasant one, is welcome. Mrs. Macpherson had been dull enough as she sat knitting by the fire that evening: she could not pretend to be disinclined for this adventure.

‘We must get the poor crater in,’ she said. ‘You’d not leave a beast out in yon shed on such-a-like night.’ She had all her wits about her in a moment. Macpherson was directed to keep an eye on Jockie and Gib in case they should pilfer anything (for the Reid honesty was not above reproach) while she and ‘the lass,’ a huge red-armed young woman, went out to attend upon the sufferer.

Left to himself in the kitchen, with the two tinker children, the farmer concluded that no Christian could allow them to remain as wet and cold as they were.

‘Bide there and dinna stir till I come back!’ he commanded them. Then he lit a candle and went up the creaking wooden stairs to the bedroom above, there to find some coverings for the two little melancholies in the kitchen.

There were no children’s clothes in the house, for his own family had all grown up and dispersed long ago. With Scottish thrift the good man shrank from giving his own excellent flannel garments to the tinkers, so he looked over quite a pile of flannel shirts before he found two sufficiently old to sacrifice on the altar of philanthropy. They were found at last, however, and along with them Macpherson brought an old knitted rag-rug, which had

seen better days. He descended the stairs carefully, with the bundle of clothing under his arm, the candle guttering in the draughts. Jockie and Gib had apparently obeyed his commands, for they were standing just where he had left them.

No illusions existed in Macpherson's mind as to the probable or possible cleanliness of the children : he knew only too well the sort of state they were in. But they were human beings, and he would not have let his dog lie out of doors on such a night. Plainly the children must be kept beside the fire till morning at least.

'Stop where ye are !' he commanded again, and plunged this time out into the night. In a few minutes he returned with a huge armful of dried bracken. Laid on the floor near the fire it made a bed such as Jockie and Gib had never before enjoyed. They would have cuddled down upon it just as they were, in their dripping rags, but Macpherson bade these be stripped off. Here an unexpected difficulty arose ; for it was Mary Reid's simple habit to sew her children into their clothes at the beginning of winter, and wait until the garments fell off by processes of natural decay.

So, when commanded to undress, Jockie and Gib found it impossible to obey — nor could they explain their plight. Macpherson seized the eldest child and got off his outer garment (the man's coat tied on by the sleeves) ; but the next layer of covering defied him. At last, grasping the situation, he got out his big clasp-knife and severed the stitches that held the rags together. Oh, if you had seen the poor little stiff empurpled bodies that were revealed as the rags fell off, and how grotesque the children looked when each of them had assumed one of the farmer's long flannel shirts ! Macpherson laughed aloud ; and Jockie and Gib, exhausted as they were, gave a skirl of delight.

'There ye are ! get intil yer bed, laddies,' he directed. The rag carpet was spread over them, they sank down into the soft warm bracken, and forgot all their childish woes in about half a second of time.

Macpherson then looked at the soaking, evil-smelling heap of rags that lay upon the floor and questioned what could be done with them. He would have liked to burn the sorry garments there and then, but they were much too wet to burn. So after a moment of consideration he gathered them up in the tongs, as a haymaker lifts a bundle of hay upon a fork, and marched out once more

into the darkness to fling his unsavoury load upon the midden. It was obviously impossible to adopt any half-measures with the clothing of Jockie and Gib.

With an altruism that had elements of nobility in it—for she kept a spotlessly clean house—Mrs. Macpherson had urged her suffering fellow-sister to let them take her into the farm-house. But here the tinker woman was firm ; she knew nothing of houses and had never slept upon a bed in her life. Shelter from the wind and rain was all she needed—she would ‘do fine in the shed.’ This decision, however, was modified in so far that she moved into the byre, where the presence and breath of three cows had raised the temperature to a certain degree. There, in an empty stall, they made a wonderful bed of hay for her, and the lass was dispatched to the house for some dry coverings.

The cows, chinking their head-chains, turned to gaze with great liquid eyes at the human intruder who had come to disturb them—they could not understand all this commotion. . . . The shelter of the byre, the warm breath of the cows, and the bed of hay, formed a whole of luxury to Mary Reid such as she had never dreamed of before. So her richer and perhaps less fortunate sisters might regard a particularly well-appointed nursing home.

She needed all her comforts, poor soul ; for fatigue and exposure had told even on her splendid constitution. Mrs. Macpherson became a trifle nervous about her patient as the night wore on, and began to wish herself well through with the case. No well-intentioned legislator being at hand to inquire whether she was fully qualified, the good woman unquestioningly did her best as a nurse, and trusted that Nature would supplement her deficiencies.

At last, just as the cold dawn broke, the little tinker was born : a beautiful child ; a king might have envied him. The unqualified nurse got a drop of warm milk from the cow, put into it a good lashing of whisky, and administered the draught to her patient ; then, looking rather wan after her night of anxiety, she stepped out into the chill morning air.

The storm had blown over ; a last ragged mass of cloud, like the remnants of a defeated army, went straggling across the top of the hills, and in the clear greenish sky the morning star hung serene and brilliant above the place where the child lay.

Mrs. Macpherson found herself face to face with a new and

perplexing situation when she returned to the farm-house that morning.

For Jockie and Gib had wakened up very lively from their comfortable night beside the fire, yet quite destitute of clothing in which it would be possible for them to go out.

They were pattering about the kitchen in huge delight, each wrapped round in one of the farmer's thick flannel shirts. It was the gala day of their lives. Warmed, sheltered, fed high on porridge and milk—such bliss they had never dreamed of before. Already the lass had to complain of their thievish ways; hadn't she found Jockie with his hands in the sugar-basin when her back was turned for a moment? What on earth was to be done with them? she asked.

'Hoots! it's easy seen you've no' had a fainly to sort,' said Mrs. Macpherson. She had reared eight children in her day, and felt perfectly equal to the task of quelling Jockie and Gib.

Two or three sharp smacks were administered, and the children were made to lie down on their impromptu bed again till some clothes were found for them. They lay cuddled together under the bracken and old carpet, exactly like two puppies, ready to jump out from their basket at a moment's notice. Their sharp little eyes followed Mrs. Macpherson round and round the kitchen, and occasionally one or other of the boys, as he caught sight of some coveted morsel, would break out in the indescribable tinker beggin'-whine, which has a cadence all its own:

'Gie's a wee bit bread if *you* please!'—or:

'Gie's a puckle sugar if *you* please!'—or:

'Gie's a droppie tea if *you* please!' till Mrs. Macpherson bade them be quiet on pain of being smacked once more, and this time with severity.

Clearly something must be done at once about providing the little imps with clothing.

'They'll have me a beggar like themselves!' Mrs. Macpherson exclaimed, for she saw that she must send the lass round to ask the neighbours for cast-off clothing if the children were to be got out of the house at all that day.

'Put on yer things, Jeanie,' she directed the young woman, 'and be off to the Manse to ask Mrs. Thomson has she some bits of things she could spare to cover the bairns; and there's Mrs. Macdonald, east at the shop, has wee bodies of her own—maybe she'd spare something. And if you see Mary Reid's man, tell

him he's wanted here—big lazy loon that he is! Not that he'll do anything for his bairns—he doesn't care what comes of them; but I'll give him a hearin'.'

Having dispatched Jeanie on her errand, Mrs. Macpherson thought that it was time to brew a cup of strong tea for her patient in the byre. But before leaving the kitchen, she called Tweed, the old red collie dog, a creature of almost human intelligence, and put him in charge of the children. He squatted beside them, and if they dared to stir he gave a kindly but firm growl that completely quenched even the spirit of Jockie and Gib.

Stepping across the half-frozen mud of the yard, a steaming cup of tea in one hand, a bit of bread and butter in the other, Mrs. Macpherson advanced towards the byre. At the same moment some one else was coming across the yard also, and called out a cheerful greeting :

'Good morning, Mrs. Macpherson; this is a fine day after the storm. Where are you off to with that cup of tea, I'd like to know?'

The speaker was the last sort of person one would expect to see in a farm-yard. She was a tall, rather fantastic-looking woman, with the ruins of beauty in both face and figure. Her large expressive eyes had great black circles under them, her thick hair was dashed with grey, and her skin had seen better days; yet with it all she was good to look at. An indefinable air of interest hung about her; she wore large gold loops in her ears, walked with a silver-headed stick, and dressed in clothes of a very modish cut.

Mrs. Macpherson laid down the cup of tea on the step of the byre, and shook hands cordially with her visitor.

'Deed, Miss Nellie,' she said, 'it's just a tinker-wife I've got in the byre.'

Miss Nellie, as she was called by everyone, was extremely popular in the neighbourhood. There was about her a something romantic, unexplained, interesting, which—all unknown to themselves—captivated the country-people. They admired her appearance, laughed at her amusing high-handed manner that yet was so full of kindness, and were never tired of wondering how it was she 'didna get a man' when women with half her charm had been 'wooed and married and a', as the old song says.

True, Miss Nellie was fearfully eccentric: there was really nothing she would not do or say; but then she had money in

abundance, and that should have weighed against a good deal of eccentricity. Her kind heart led her into many mistakes ; but they were always generous mistakes. She kept a perfect menagerie of sick and miserable beasts and birds. Broken-kneed old horses rescued from hawkers' carts, rabbits and cats found in traps, wounded birds—these she collected from far and near, bound up their wounds, fed and cherished them with both skill and tenderness. The shepherds and keepers knew that if they brought any such creatures to Miss Nellie she would receive the charge with delight, and the men always got a tip and 'a glass' for their trouble.

With some knowledge of the strange character of her visitor, Mrs. Macpherson guessed that a sight of Mary Reid and the baby would interest her.

'Step into the byre, Miss Nellie, please, till I show ye what I've got there,' she said, smiling as she lifted the cup of tea from the doorstep and unlocked the door.

They stepped together into the byre and approached the stall where the invalid lay.

Mary Reid was now, by her own way of thinking, in the full enjoyment of the utmost luxury. Billows of dry warm hay and bracken surrounded her, she was piled with heavy blankets, and her head rested on a sack stuffed with hay.

The little tinker also, to judge by appearances, seemed to be thoroughly enjoying this his first day in the Vale of Tears. Cradled in his mother's arms, his little head burrowed deep in her warm and ample breast, he slept profoundly. Mrs. Macpherson had scant respect for his slumbers. She leant down and lifted him from his blissful dreams.

'See what a braw laddie we've got here, Miss Nellie !' she said, almost as proud of the child as if it had been her own.

'Bless me ! There's a baby, is there ?' Miss Nellie exclaimed. 'Which of the tinkers is it ? It's so dark in here I can't see who it is.'

'Mary Reid—you'll see in a minute when yer eyes get used with the dark.'

Well Miss Nellie knew the whole hopeless Reid tribe : she could name every man and woman of them. She leant down towards the invalid in her kindly way, laying her white hand on Mary's shoulder for a moment.

'So it's you, Mary ? and you've got another baby—well, I'm glad you're in here, not out in the tents in such weather.'

An upturned box had been put beside the bed to serve as table or chair, and Miss Nellie sat on it now and commanded Mrs. Macpherson to give the baby into her arms. She looked at him admiringly.

'Well, I must say he's a fine child, Mary,' she said; 'you've every reason to be proud of him; but on my word, I think there are enough of you without this one! Richard and his wife have five, and Rab has four, and now you and Jock have three—there's the round dozen to feed without counting the grown-ups. The country-side won't support you all soon!'

Mary began in her whimpering tinker voice to acquiesce in this plain statement of her family's situation.

'Deed and it's a puir cauld life we hae o' it, my leddy!' she said.

'It is; but you seem to like it better than any other, or you wouldn't lead it.'

Mary only grunted before the undeniable logic of this remark. She thought the speech a very hard one: it is never pleasant to have our faults put plainly before us.

Miss Nellie sat in silence for a minute, looking down at the child she held. She was wondering and questioning, in hopeless modern fashion, why this child had come into being. Years would in all probability only turn him into a man like his father—a useless idle vagabond, thievish and drunken. Yet he was such a fine boy—it seemed cruel.

'The poor body had an awful time of it last night,' Mrs. Macpherson began, anxious to expiate upon Mary's sufferings; but Miss Nellie cut her short.

'Ah, well, that's over and done with; the question is, what's to become of the child?'

Both the women looked at her in surprise: the mother stared with not much more comprehension of the question than a sheep or a cow might have shown if questioned about the fate of its young; Mrs. Macpherson had only a glimmer of greater understanding.

'Is he just to grow up like the rest of them?' Miss Nellie repeated, speaking perhaps more to herself than to her hearers. Then, a minute later, she added impulsively:

'Give him to me Mary; I'll educate him, I'll make a man of him and lift him out of this wretched life you all lead!'

'Eh, Miss Nellie! mind what ye're about!' Mrs. Macpherson cried, with scant respect for the feelings of Mary Reid. 'A tinker's

bairn ! —they're all alike ! ' What she meant to imply by this ambiguous saying it was not difficult to guess. The mother, listening to this conversation, was bewildered.

‘ What's that, my leddy ? ' she asked ; ‘ I dinna a'thegither ken what ye'r sayin' .

‘ I'm saying, will you give the boy to me to bring up ? I'll be very good to him—I'm sure you know that, Mary .

‘ Ech aye, that ye wad ! '

‘ Well, it's a fair offer, and I'll stick to it if you make up your mind to give him to me. Take a day or two to think over it—see what your man says—and then let me know .

Miss Nellie handed the little tinker back to his mother's arms as she spoke, and rose from her seat beside the bed. ‘ Are you all right here ? ' she asked. ‘ A byre isn't a very comfortable place in this weather .

‘ I'm a wee thing ower warm, my leddy , ' Mary admitted as she received the baby under the blankets. It was the only fault she had to find with the Nursing Home .

• • • • •
Jeanie came back from her begging expedition with a large bundle of clothing for the children.

The story of the tinker baby that had come into the world on such a wild night touched every maternal heart, and a quantity of infant's clothing had been given along with the larger garments for Jockie and Gib .

‘ My word ! they're in luck the day ! ' Mrs. Macpherson cried, as she looked over the bundle. ‘ We can get rid of the bairns now they've got clothes to their backs .

She had no wish to harbour Jockie and Gib a moment longer than was absolutely necessary .

The task of dressing these little imps was no easy one. As well might she have attempted to dress a pair of grasshoppers. Buttons, strings, hooks and eyes, were all unknown and foolish nonsense to the children, who, as has been explained, had never been hampered by those products of over-civilisation. To be compelled to stand still while bands were tied round their waists and buttons fastened at their throats, seemed to them altogether superfluous. Only by a firm system of cuffs and smacks was it accomplished. Then Mrs. Macpherson spread two enormous scones with treacle, gave one to each of the children, opened the door, and chased them out of the house .

'Off ye go! Away and seek yer faither—tell him ye've a fine wee brother east there in the byre,' she called after them.

But Jockie and Gib needed no hastening from the farm kitchen; they had had enough of imprisonment within four walls, and made a joyous rush into the chill outer air the moment the door was opened.

The scattered members of the Reid tribe were gathering themselves together by this time. The men had risen from their drunken sleep very stiff and miserable, only to find that the women and children were not there. During the tempest of the previous night they had wisely sought shelter in an old half-roofed cottage which stood empty just then, waiting to be pulled down. Now they came straggling along the road in search of their men kind. They had collected a certain amount of food—bits of bread, a hunk of cheese, and so on: it was time now to get the tents put up. Well the women knew the sort of tempers the men would be in: there was not much illusion left in these wifely hearts. They knew also that the men had decided to have a spree of several days' duration. One of them had had the luck to find an oyster-shell which contained a fairly good pearl, and this had been sold to an innkeeper for a sovereign. Such a bit of dazzling good fortune came to the tinker men perhaps once in four or five years, though they were constantly fishing, in an idle unscientific manner, in those rivers where pearls may sometimes be found. Their one way of celebrating such luck was to drink until the money was exhausted. So it was only a question this morning of how long it would be before they were drunk again! The women calculated that it might be possible to get their husbands to put up the tents for them before they went off to buy more whisky; but they knew it would be a difficult matter.

One of the ladies, more artful than the others, decided to boil some water and make tea for her lord and master before she mooted the question of the tents. Do you know the tinker's 'tinny'?—that small pitcher, shiny with the smoke of a hundred wood fires, that is never out of their hands? No wonder in their comfortless lives that they cling to their 'tinnies' and would wheedle tea to boil in them from a heart of stone!

It was no easy job to light a fire this morning; but those who have been accustomed to light fires under every climatic disadvantage for a lifetime do not find it impossible. By dint of coaxing and blowing, a thin column of smoke began to rise at last

by the dyke-side ; and with the exercise of almost uncanny skill the water was got to boil. Even a mouthful of warm tea had a mollifying effect on the gaunt blue-lipped men. One of them set off to find the donkey, which had strayed down the road and was snatching some innutritious morsels of winter grass from the ditch. The other two men shouldered the tent withies and the sodden rags that were to cover them, and slouched off towards the nearest camping-place.

All over the country there are these recognised camping-grounds where the tinkers are allowed to pitch their tents and light their fires. In this instance the selected spot was down by a burn-side, where a high wooded bank completely shut off the east wind. All the ground here had charred spots on it where bygone fires had once been lit. It was a popular halting-place because there were plenty of sticks to be found in the wood, and plenty of water in the burn—the burn which in summer flowed along with a sweet brawling sound, but was hoarse to-day with the winter rains.

The advantages of these well-known camping-places are obvious ; for the scattered members of a gang are sure to find each other if not in one such place, then in another not very far off. If there is any uncertainty as to direction, owing to cross-roads, they resort to the old gipsy and tinker habit of the 'patteran'—laying one or two handfuls of grass at the cross-roads, twisted towards the direction that has been taken.

Jockie and Gib were in no difficulty as to where to find their belongings. They had camped a hundred times down by the same burn-side and made straight for it now, appearing on the top of the wooded bank just as the three tents had been pitched below it.

The children were, of course, scarcely recognisable in their grand new clothes. For a moment the women thought that two little villagers on their way from school had strayed into the camp. Then with monkey-like agility Jockie and Gib came tumbling down through the alder bushes and down the bank, leaving no doubt at all about their identity.

'Mither's lyin' east at the Glen Farm, an' she's got a wee laddie !' was their shrill announcement. It was received without any excitement. What, to the Reids, was an additional child more or less ? Far more exciting were the wonderful clothes of Jockie and Gib. In a very few moments it was decided that the children were much too well dressed, and had quite an undue share of warm clothing ('toggie,' they named it, in their quaint old cant speech).

Now much as they had objected to putting on their new garments Jockie and Gib resented even more being deprived of them. It takes a wonderfully short time to become accustomed to comfort, and half an hour had convinced the children that warm clothes were a good thing. So they bit and scratched like little cats in their efforts to retain possession of them. All in vain, however, for it needed no discernment to see that such well-dressed children would excite very little compassion at the cottage doors.

Winter was always a prosperous begging season, owing mostly to the wretched appearance of the half-naked children. Obviously, then, Jockie and Gib must divide the spoil with the other young members of the tribe. The neat warm garments were hidden in a very artistic manner under some very ragged ones, and in a short time the children to all appearance had reverted to their former state of cold and filth.

This done, they received their instructions : they were to go off together to the village and tell at every cottage the story of their little brother born in the storm. At each door they were to beg for food for their mother and for themselves. Begging, however, was such second nature to the boys that they scarcely needed these instructions.

The pearl orgy went on for three days. At the end of that time the men had perforce to stop drinking because not a penny was left in their ragged pockets. They would fain have drunk more, but were not even men enough to earn money for another carousal.

Mary Reid in the meantime had been leading her luxurious invalid life at the Glen Farm, attended to by Mrs. Macpherson.

During these long days of effortless comfort, the poor soul had a sort of slow revelation vouchsafed to her. It was purely material in its origin, but a revelation none the less. An obscure feeling arose somewhere within her that, given assured food and shelter, life would become a different matter altogether.

The educated mind can scarcely grasp, even by the utmost stretch of imagination, what the mental condition of a creature like Mary Reid really is. Consider that for centuries no ray of education has pierced the darkness of ignorance in which the tinkers live. There are no such savages in our Islands, for they observe no religious customs and are 'a law unto themselves' in the fullest sense of the expression. Constant exposure to wind and weather has given to their bodies almost the hardihood of animals, but the only direction

in which their intelligence develops is that of self-interest. How to beg or pilfer enough of food for each day is their one preoccupation ; and when the difficulty of doing this in lonely country-places is taken into consideration, the amount of pilfering is very small indeed. They seldom steal in real earnest ; for there seems to be a distinction somewhere in their minds between taking a turnip or two from the fields, or lifting a few potatoes, and actually stealing articles from houses.

So the tinkers are not unpopular with the country-people. They are regarded as a nuisance, but not as a danger, and are seldom grudged something at each door they come to.

It was, then, wholly through the avenues of sense that Mary Reid began to think after a dim, confused fashion. She felt warm and rested and comfortable for about the first time in her life. Abundance of food was hers for the asking ; she suddenly found herself questioning what life would be like if one were always warm, comfortable, and well fed ? Then another quite distinct idea came to her as she lay there in the pleasant gloom of the byre and held the little tinker to her heart : After all, why should he not live this life of splendid ease, instead of the wild and miserable life of his race ? Mary knew that her own fate was sealed for ever—a tinker she was, and a tinker she must remain ; but why should this child not escape into the happy world that she was getting a glimpse of ?

For it appeared that Miss Nellie had really been in earnest when she offered to adopt the boy. Since that first morning, she had walked to the farm every day to repeat her offer and press its advantages upon Mary.

‘ See what a fine baby he is ! Give him to me and I’ll make a fine man of him too ! ’ she told the mother each time. ‘ I’ll educate him and send him out to Canada, and he’ll have a house and land of his own before he’s twenty. Isn’t that better than growing up to be like Richard and Rab—starving when they’re not drunk, and drunk when they’re not starving ? ’

It was not Miss Nellie’s habit to mince matters, as you see by this rather rude speech : the only concession she made to politeness was that she did not include Jock, Mary’s husband, in her indictment of tinker manhood. But Mary knew quite well that Jock was as drunken and idle as his brothers, though Miss Nellie had not mentioned him by name.

She always replied meekly, ‘ Aye, my leddy, it’s truth ye’re sayin’,¹ sure’s deith ! ’

Then Miss Nellie would tell her wonderful tales of Canada, the land of plenty, and contrast these with the wretched life of hunger and cold that Mary and her people led. Continual dropping wears away stones: every day Mary opposed the scheme less, till Miss Nellie became almost certain of gaining her point. Then bright dreams of the little tinker's future began to float before Mary's eyes. In imagination she saw him a grown man, rich and powerful . . .

Curiously enough she had no ambitions for Jockie and Gib; they seemed to belong so inevitably to the old order that it never occurred to her to imagine them in other conditions. But the baby was different; perhaps, because he had nearly cost her her life, she already prized him far above his brethren.

The other Reid women came in due time to see Mary and inspect her new-born son. They brought the news of the drinking bout (which Mary received with entire unconcern), and in their turn were told the tidings of Miss Nellie's scheme for adopting the child.

Here indeed was subject for discussion round the camp fire. That Mary was supremely lucky was of course their first verdict. They each had young babies, and had to trudge along carrying them on their backs mile after mile every day. Mary would be absolved from this duty. Further, Miss Nellie had made another dazzling offer: she would board and lodge Mary till the baby was old enough to do without maternal sustenance—it would not be fair to the child to separate him from his mother. There was luck indeed! No wonder Mary wanted to accept such a chance when it came her way. Two difficulties had to be reckoned with, however—Jockie and Gib, and Jockie and Gib's father. Miss Nellie with all her philanthropy had not extended her invitation to the children; but this obstacle was not very hard to surmount. They must just be added to the other families, get a crust and a bone and a drop of tea with the rest of them, and be none the worse for a little neglect. Nor would the separation be at all heart-breaking. The Reids were always 'on the road,' going and coming through that bit of country a dozen times in the year: Mary would see her children often enough. As for her man, Mary, with artless cynicism, hinted to the philanthropist that a little money would easily settle his objections: he could have another spree, as long as the one he was just recovering from.

'The downhill path is easy,' the poet tells us. Mary Reid had only had four days of luxury, yet already she had set her heart upon spending the whole winter in comfort.

The very thought of resuming her usual mode of life sent a shiver down her relaxed spine.

The little tinker was wakening to his fifth morning in the world, when a slow procession came winding up the long hill road that leads to the Glen Farm.

All the Reids : Richard carrying the tent sticks ; Rab slouching along, his dilapidated pipes under his arm ; Jock the tinsmith with the instruments of his trade. Their wives were heavily burdened ; for each had a baby tied upon her back, and carried moreover a load of tin cans, 'nawken's chaeterie' as they call them, for sale on the road. The older children followed at their own sweet will, the younger ones packed into the donkey-cart which in general ended the procession. But this morning the Reid forces seemed to have been augmented ; for a second little cart, led by two more men, came after the other.

Jockie and Gib scoured ahead to the farm and burst into the byre to impart a great bit of news to their mother.

'Grannie's on the road, Mither !' they screamed ; and again, 'Grannie's on the road ! She's oot-bye !'

At the sound of these words Mary sat up upon her elbow, as if the news startled her. An expression very like fear crossed her face. She hugged the little tinker closer against her side.

Looking out from the darkness of the byre into the morning light, she could see the whole procession of men and women framed like a picture by the doorway, as they came trailing towards the farm. When they reached the gate the procession halted, and two of the men lifted out of the second donkey-cart the strangest object imaginable.

Seated in a large creel of plaited willows, much in the attitude of a Buddha, was an old woman. So old she was that Time seemed to have done with her—had given her up apparently as a bad job, and decided to let her choose her own date for death. Not a tooth was left in her head, and her hands were shrivelled away till they resembled the claws of some ancient bird. All appearance of life had long ago left the flesh of her face—it was exactly like that of a mummy ; but deep in their sockets her bright blue eyes flashed with a strange vindictive gleam like the eyes of a ferret.

This weird relic of humanity had indeed trodden the earth for the extraordinary period of a hundred and four years. The tribe held her sacred, they obeyed her every nod, would almost have

worshipped her, and trembled before her displeasure, for she was believed to have uncanny powers. A glance of those terrible old blue eyes could, it was thought, 'owerlook' anyone who displeased her. She had never slept under a roof in all her hundred years. On the ground she had lain, and would lie till that time, surely not to be long delayed now, when it would be her bed for ever. Of all the sons and daughters she had borne, not one now survived. Long years ago she had seen her children's children die—yet here she was still. There is something that chills the blood in such permanence of the impermanent. It seems to shut out the survivor from the great human family whose members are linked together by the common tie of mortality.

This old woman was a tremendous asset to the Reid tribe, for her uncanny appearance and almost fabulous age made the country-people hold her in great awe. There was not a farmer's or shepherd's wife in the district who would have dared to refuse Grannie Reid an alms. She had been 'on the road' so long before their day—so long before their father's or grandfather's day! At the Glen Farm, where Macphersons had lived for three generations, they had a tradition that the present Macpherson's grandfather remembered Grannie a hearty woman in his boyhood.

At some far-off date in their tribal history, the Reids had divided into two bands. One migrated into Argyllshire, while the other remained in the old Perthshire haunts. Then a fierce dispute arose between them for the possession of Grannie. Long and heated was the contest, till at last they came to a compromise: she was to be a joint possession, sometimes in charge of one branch of the family, sometimes of the other. They did not pretend to love her; but they feared her exceedingly, and there was abundance in the camp when Grannie was with them.

The old creature was despotic to a degree. She migrated from district to district, from county to county, as the fancy took her, seated in her creel in the little cuddy-cart and waited on with servility by her many descendants. In this way she made dramatic appearances from time to time among her kindred. Suddenly, perhaps, as they crouched round the camp fire late at night, the rattle of the cuddy-cart would sound, and in the cart was the creel with the dread little figure of Grannie squatting in it as upright as if she were carved out of stone. . . . Then came a stir among them all, for Grannie demanded the best of everything—the most sheltered corner of the ragged tent, the tastiest bone to pick.

The children fled before the old woman in terror, disappearing at sight of her as rabbits whisk into their holes at sight of a dog.

The day after her arrival in a place, Grannie would set off to 'work' the neighbourhood. Her methods were very simple, but quite effective.

The cart stopped at the door of the house she desired to visit, and the two Reids who were deputed to carry the creel of the old despot lifted it out of the cart. They never knocked at any door, simply lifted the latch and walked into the house. There they deposited Grannie's creel, right in the middle of the floor; and there she sat, glinting out of her wicked old eyes at the frightened women and children who hastened to do her bidding. Tea, tobacco, potatoes, old clothes she would demand—and she generally got whatever she asked. Her bearers in the meantime stood by the door, waiting the signal to lift the creel and carry it out again. Thus the old creature went on from house to house, in a kind of royal progress, till she had extracted as much as she required in the way of food and clothing.

But this morning Grannie Reid had not come upon a begging expedition to the Glen Farm—she had come in quest of her erring great-great-granddaughter-in-law. For, on arrival at the camp the night before, Grannie had been met by the news of the little tinker's birth and the rumour of his proposed adoption. Here indeed was matter for prompt interference.

Having discovered where Mary was housed, Grannie directed the bearers to carry the creel into the byre, that she might come face to face with the culprit. At sight of her ancient relative Mary sat up on her bracken couch, clasping the baby tightly in her arms, but spoke not a word. There was an oppressive silence for a minute; then the vials of Grannie's wrath were poured out:

'Sae it's a fine leddy we've got here!' she said with biting sarcasm,—'a braw leddy!—maybe ye'll spare an auld body a puckle tea, mem?—me that's been sleepin' oot-bye a' this coarse weather, an' you sae warm and dry?'

Mary winced, but was not quick-witted enough to find any retort to make. She kept silence, rocking the child in her arms and pretending to be very busy with him.

'D'ye no' think shame tae be lyin' there an' the bairn fower days auld?' the old woman asked next, in a contemptuous tone; and at this taunt poor Mary faltered out the tale of her illness and sufferings in the storm. But it did not touch Grannie

one whit. She only despised Mary from the bottom of her heart, and thought her a hopeless degenerate.

‘An’ ye’re tae mak’ a gadgie (house-dweller) o’ the bairn, they’re tellin’ me !’ she said. ‘He’ll be as fine as yersel, then !’

‘Weel, Grannie, the leddy says she’ll gie him schoolin’ an’ mak’ a braw man o’ him, an’ he’ll hae siller o’ his ain afore he’s twenty,’ Mary pled.

‘Schoolin’ !’ the old woman screamed—‘Schoolin’ !—wha wants schoolin’ ? A pretty like nawken (tinker) he’ll be wi’ schoolin’ ! Did ever ye hear tell o’ a nawken could read or write ?’

Then Mary, with sudden injudicious frankness, expressed her secret :

‘Eh ! but I’m no’ wantin’ the laddie to be a nawken. It’s a gey hard life, Grannie.’

Here was open rebellion against the established order of things ; and having once uttered her rebel thought, Mary faced the old tyrant bravely, laying before her all Miss Nellie’s schemes for the future of the child. No homeless wanderer was her little tinker to be in years to come, but a rich man with house and land of his own somewhere across the sea (‘t’ither Watches,’ as Mary expressed it in tinker talk). In this wonderful country men could always make gold, and her son would found there a new race of Reids richer and happier than his fathers.

All this poor Mary expressed, oh ! so falteringly and haltingly ; for she was afraid of Grannie, not very sure of the scheme herself, but anxious, somewhere in the depths of her darkly ignorant mind, to do something for the child. She had, however, to reckon with one of the most immovable things in human nature—the intense conservatism of extreme old age. For, like a pool of water slowly congealing on a bitter night, the heart of man is apt to contract, with the passing of time, into a terrible immobility.

When, exhausted by her eloquence, Mary sank back against the pillow, the old woman burst out into a torrent of bitter protest.

Her tinker talk, framed partly of Scotch dialect, partly of cant words, would need a philologist to do it full justice.

‘A braw bodachan (man) ye’ll mak’ o’ the bairn gin ye gie him ower tae gadgies !’ she cried ; and then she came to the gist of the argument—her deep contempt for these same ‘gadgies’—this whole race of pitiful house-dwellers. They were afraid of everything : afraid of cold and heat ; of wind and rain ; of hunger and thirst. Was there a gadgie among them who would dare to sleep on the

lennam (ground) on a winter night ? She sat there, this strange survival, and discoursed on the supreme advantages of the tinker mode of life as compared with that of the house-dweller, much as an ancient oak-tree endowed with speech might discourse to the saplings of the wood upon the restrictions of a hot-house existence.

‘ Hae I no’ had my health a’ my hunner years ? ’ she asked triumphantly ; ‘ an’ did ever I sleep in a wuddrus (bed) ? There wasna ane o’ my bairns born in a keir (house), an’ I had twal’ o’ them. . . . ’ She paused, searching back in the recesses of memory. Scenes a-many of birth and of death alike surged up from the past and moved before her mind’s eye. Munching her toothless jaws as if she chewed something tangible in these memories, the old woman sat in silence for a minute, then recommenced her tale :

‘ Aye ! . . . twal . . . eicht sons an’ fower dachters . . . an’ a’ in the grave lang, lang syne ! . . . ’

She paused to ruminant again, before she added, ‘ But mind, the nawken manishies (tinker women) hae their weans easier—thaе gadgie wives make an unco’ work aboot haein a bairn. Mony’s the time I’ve seen me tak the road again wi’ my bairn on my back an’ it no’ twa oors auld. . . . ’ At this hardy reminiscence Mary winced again, ashamed of her own softness. This was exactly what Grannie desired ; she watched the effect of her words, and then went on to impress her lesson if possible more deeply :

‘ The same wi’ deith—they get awa easier. Ye’ll no’ mind my son Richard—ech ! no—he was deid fifty year syne . . . Well, Richard had a hoast, syne a doctor body doon Aberfeldy way cam’ roond by the wattles (tents) an’ said it was sinfu’ keepin’ a deein’ man oot-by in the cauld. Syne they pit him intil a granzie (barn), puir man . . . A sair time he had o’t—he couldna get awa.’

The old woman paused significantly, then nodded her little withered head, and smiled a cunning, cunning smile. ‘ But I helpit the puir lad : “ *Bing Avree, Richard* ” (come away, Richard), says I intil his lug ; “ *D’ye no jan it’s morgan ?* ” (“ Do you not know it’s morning ? ”), an’ wi’ that he up an’ oot frae the granzie . . . a shuker rattie it was (a clear moonlight night it was). I laid him doon oot-by on the lennam, an’ he hadna ta’en three breiths o’ the caller air afore he got awa’ ’

Mary gasped at this horrible reminiscence and hugged the baby to her heart, much as the father in the song clasps his son when the Erl-King whispers in his ear : could it be that she would ever thus wish to hasten the departure of the little creature whom she had

endowed with life? She did not, of course, express the thought in these grandiloquent words; but it darted through her mind in some sort of form, and she shuddered.

‘Aweel, Mary,’ the old woman said, ‘tak yer way o’t—mak’ a gadgie o’ the bairn if ye please—it’s truth I’ve telt t’ye.’

With these parting words, the old woman beckoned to the lads who had carried her in. At her signal they slouched forward and lifted the creel again. Mary was forced to speak.

‘Are ye for the road then, Grannie?’ she asked timidly.

‘*Syet*’ (‘Yes’), Grannie answered laconically, without even turning her head in Mary’s direction.

‘Ye’ve no’ seen the bairn,’ Mary cried, distress in her voice.

‘Ugh! I’m no’ carin’ for gadgie bairns,’ the old woman retorted—she would not evince the slightest interest in this unworthy offshoot of the tribe. Her bearers hoisted the creel between them and started for the road again. Mary gazed after their retreating figures as they marched across the yard and through the gate, carrying their curious burden.

Down on the road below the farm the whole good-for-nothing cavalcade of the Reids was to be seen, halted by the dyke-side. The very air reeked of them: an indescribable rank smell of wood-smoke, old rags, and filth. Mary’s husband was there, but he did not even trouble to saunter up to the farm to see his new-born son.

As Mary gazed out at her tribe she gave a deep sigh: ‘Aweel!’ she said aloud to herself, and again ‘Aweel!’ as if she were renouncing something. A few minutes later the cavalcade moved on. Jockie and Gib, however, rushed up to the byre with a parting message to their mother:

‘Faither says “ye may gie the bairn tae the leddy for a rij (a sovereign) an’ we’re aff Aberfeldy wye.”’

Having delivered this fond paternal message, the children darted off to the farm to beg a last scone from Mrs. Macpherson before they ‘took the road.’

Here was a dilemma for poor Mary—her husband evidently wanted his money, and yet Grannie was bitterly opposed to the idea of the child’s adoption. Mary knew well enough that she, not Jock, would get the blame and would come under Grannie’s ban. Grannie seldom found fault with the men—they were sacred in her eyes; she reserved all her wrath for their unfortunate wives. If Jock was ‘angered’ by not getting the money as he

expected, he would probably beat her ; but Mary had often been beaten. She could face the thought of that better than the fear of Grannie's tongue, and (oh, horrible over-mastering terror !)—the idea that she and the child might be 'overlooked' by the old woman. Mary was not accustomed to doing much thinking : to and fro in the darkness of her untutored mind she tumbled the arguments for and against the scheme till she was confused and weary. She would give the child to the lady—she would not give him ; Jock wanted the money—Grannie would be 'angered' ; she herself wanted to keep the child—yet equally she wanted him to be given this wonderful chance that had come his way so unexpectedly. There seemed no light anywhere on the path. . .

In the evening when Mrs. Macpherson came into the byre she thought that her patient was very restless.

'What ails ye, Mary ? are ye not feelin' so well ?' she asked kindly.

Mary only shook her head

'Ye'll soon be getting up,' Mrs. Macpherson went on, anxious to cheer her ; 'you're that strong and healthy, it's wonderfu'.'

'Aye,' Mary assented, and added with a sort of shy impulsiveness, 'Ye've been gey kind, mistress.'

'I'd do as much for any sick pairson,' said Mrs. Macpherson ; she had a touch of self-righteousness in her nature which made it a great pleasure to her to make this pious announcement. Certain texts of Scripture crossed her memory at this moment, and gave her a feeling of virtuous satisfaction : 'Do good unto all men,' she found herself quoting, and then was pulled up by the remainder of the text, 'especially unto those that are of the household of faith.' She could not in the wildest way connect poor Mary with the household of faith ; so she was robbed of any satisfaction in that text, and had to fall back upon some of the other exhortations to good works which seemed more applicable.

'Well, good-night to ye, Mary,' she said. 'If ye get a good sleep ye'll be all right the morn.'

'Aye, mistress, I'll be fine,' Mary replied.

The next morning, just as day broke in the east, Mary rose from her bracken bed and opened a chink of the byre door. The bitter wind blew in, but she did not seem to notice it. She looked across to the Farm windows. No light shone there yet, and there was no sound anywhere except the whistling wind as it blew round the corners of the house.

Mary shut the door again, and felt her way back to the bed. On the box beside it Mrs. Macpherson had put a candle and a box of matches—not without misgivings lest Mary should burn down the byre some night. Great admonitions had been given her on the subject, so that she scarcely dared to light the candle. But this morning it was lighted, and by its feeble guttering flame Mary began to dress. All her poor garments had been dried for her, and they lay beside the bed. One by one she put them on, slowly, almost regrettfully it seemed. She then flung her old green tartan shawl over her shoulders and in its folds she deposited the little tinker. With a sigh she stood and looked round the barn. . . . So might a king renounce his kingdom.

Last of all, Mary lifted the great bundle of tin cans she had carried on the night of her arrival, and swung them over her arm. She was ready for the road once more.

Then, as if a sudden thought had struck her, she stopped and detached a large tin pail from the bundle. It was all she could offer to Mrs. Macpherson in recognition of her kindness.

She laid it on the doorstone of the byre where it must be found, then turned away resolutely and trudged off through the darkness with her long swinging step. The little tinker did not like the cold wind: he buried his tiny head deep in the folds of the tartan shawl and gave a shrill whimpering cry.

He seemed to be entering a protest against this decision which pledged him for ever to the life of his fathers.

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IN PIAM MEMORIAM

G.B.

OBIIT NOV. 1911.

ÆTATIS SUÆ, 83.

SCENE I.—*Smoking-room, behind the dining-room of a London house in a Square.*

TIME.—*An evening in July. A few Indian pictures; photographs; water-colours, by a native artist, of the Sahib's carriage and pair in front of his palatial pillared residence in the Madras Presidency, of the Sahib seated in cutcherry under the punkah with his clerks, some time early in the 'fifties. The model of a bullock cart, incense burners in Benares silver, a gas stove.*

PRESENT, G.B. and the Quaestor. They have been talking of the Mutiny, and how G.B. met only the other day in Kensington Gardens old Mrs. P., who, in '57, was hidden by her ayah for four months in a native hut, she and her child daily running risk of discovery and death, and now lives like any other old lady in South Kensington.

Quaestor. I suppose the Mutiny never came your way at all?

G.B. Never. But we used to wonder whether it wouldn't. We were always getting threatening letters from the bazar. My assistant used to come in with them, shouting with laughter: 'I say! here's another threatening letter. We're all going to have our throats cut to-night. What a lark!' We never bothered our heads about them. All they did was to amuse my assistant.

Quaestor. Was that the Mr. Paul I remember in Norfolk Square, with all the daughters?

G.B. (laughs). Ah! Married them all off, too, with his Sunday suppers. Never gave the suitors anything but cold beef, either. After he left me at Cuddalore he inaugurated sort of horticultural shows for the natives; prizes for vegetables and fruit and so on, to encourage the local agriculture. I shall never forget one of them, and the sight of a local swell's wrath and grief at not getting a prize. I saw him beating his bare stomach with both hands, native fashion, like a drum, and wailing 'Tinnevelli Polygar got three first prizes! This Polygar got no prize! Gross injustice!

Gross injustice !' And there was Paul, trying to soothe him. 'My dear sir ! My dear sir ! Calm yourself ! Take a little betel nut ; take a little betel nut !' (*laughs uproariously*).

Quaestor. You went out to India in '49, didn't you ?

G.B. Yes, and never came home again on leave till '61. In the days of John Company it was part of your contract not to come nearer home than the Cape for the first eleven years of your service.

Quaestor. Why was that ?

G.B. It was thought it unsettled you, made you lose interest in your work and the country. (*Gravely*) Consequence was, an enormous number of young ladies at the Cape married Indian civilians.

Quaestor. You went out from Haileybury, of course. Why no public school first ?

G.B. The governor thought them no good for India. We were sent as small boys to a school at Clapton, kept by two ladies ; capital good school, too ; well fed and well taught. Can't think how they managed it ; the terms were only £30 a year ; £50 for two brothers. Clapton was right in the country then. I remember driving in to London by the stage, in '37, to see the accession of Queen Victoria proclaimed on Ludgate Hill. We saw it with mother from over a toy-shop.

Quaestor. Many people ?

G.B. No, very few ; nothing like a great crowd. It seemed to me like a regular country drive almost the whole way. You saw the City merchants waiting at the gates of their villas, for the stage to pick them up and drive them into town, just like people waiting for the coach in the country.

Quaestor. I suppose, as a boy, you mostly lived in the country ?

G.B. When we weren't in Finsbury Square, where the governor had a house. He bought his country house, in Essex, in '24, I think it was. A huge place, used to belong to the F.-B.'s. They're living there again now—bought it back after the governor's death. It had no sort of drainage, I believe, in those days, not in the modern sense ; and why we didn't all get typhoid, I don't know. I remember my brother Fred complaining to the governor once about some of the stinks, and all he said was : ' You boys are very *nice* ! '

Quaestor. Just the word used in the eighteenth century, in the sense of being rather too absurdly particular.

G.B. (laughs). Lord ! the funny things the governor used some-

times to say to us. I remember, after some folly of ours, his solemnly declaring ' You two boys are no more good than a bunch of cat's meat.' However, we managed somehow. I've done pretty well, and Fred died worth a quarter of a million. And when I went to India he said: ' Now look here, George, you promise me three things: always speak the truth, never drink between meals, and never put any money into mines.' (*Simply*) I'm sure I've done my best to keep all three.

Quaestor. Finsbury Square was a long way from the town's amusements, wasn't it, for you young gentlemen ?

G.B. No bad thing either, with half a dozen of us about ; it kept us in at night. You see, if you wanted to go to the theatre from Finsbury Square, you had to make rather a solemn function of it. Of course, we did go out sometimes and have a bit of a lark. Once we were in a supper-house at the top of the Haymarket, just about where Scott's is now. It was a great place for porter and oysters after the play, and the young ladies used to come and sit at your table and beg for a drink of your porter. One of them bothered Fred, chaffing him about his pink cheeks which looked so fresh and modest. ' Yes,' says Fred, ' and if you had a little of my modesty, young woman, it wouldn't be at all a bad thing for you.'

Quaestor. Not the sort of answer I should altogether expect from a modern youth.

G.B. (indulgently). Oh, I don't know that. Funny thing, by the way, isn't it, how little customs alter ? If you danced with a young lady in those days, at the Holborn or the Piccadilly, and refreshed her afterwards, she always chose port and lemonade. And only yesterday in the paper I saw that two young ladies had been quarrelling, and one had shied her liquor in the other's face. It was port and lemonade ! (*chuckles*). It made me feel quite young.

Quaestor. London must have been rather a rowdy place at night, in the '40's.

G.B. Yes, it was. But what strikes me most nowadays, in the way of change, is the extraordinary good behaviour of the young fellows. Look what numbers of them I see here !—

Quaestor. Nephews, grandsons of old friends, sort of distant connections, eh, sir ? I know you're always putting them up, for their examinations.

G.B. (confused). Oh, well—they stop here—I'm very glad—when they're up for the service, or for India, and their people don't

live in London. But, my word, how beautifully they behave ! Only once have I known one of them go off the rails.

Quaestor. How did he manage that ?

G.B. He was up for the army, and as usual I looked after him pretty sharply so long as the examination lasted ; made him dine at home and go to bed early, and so forth. When it was all over I told him he could go out and dine with his pals if he liked, thinking he must be pretty sick of me. Just as a matter of precaution I sat up for him, in case !—And in the young gentleman comes about midnight, outrageously tipsy. I followed him discreetly upstairs, left him to get into bed, and then went in to turn the light out. 'Mr. B.', he says, half crying, with his head rolling on the pillow, 'if you don't tell my father of my disgrasheful conde', I shall' (laughs uproariously). That was rather good, wasn't it ?

Quaestor. True compunction. On the other hand, I heard of a young gentleman recently, whose fond mother thought he was playing first-class cricket rather too long, and ventured to suggest he should begin to turn his thoughts towards a profession, as his brother had just done ; to which the young gentleman gravely replies, 'Mother, do you wish to ruin my life for me, as you've ruined Arthur's, by making me work ?'

G.B. (incredulously). Oh, no ?

Quaestor. A fact, sir. A positive fact.

G.B. (frowns). Stupid young fool. We'd nothing of that sort. I used to play a good deal of cricket before I went to India, but I should never have dreamt of letting it interfere with a profession. Nor any one else then, that ever I heard of.

Quaestor. What was Lord's like in those days ?

G.B. You got a pretty good wicket, but the out-fielding was terribly rough. I know that, because I used to field long-stop, and the ball was always either jumping over my shoulder or hitting me bang in the eye. And even the wicket was nothing like what it became later, after the ground was drained. Why, I suppose one ball in every four at least was a dead shooter.

Quaestor. I haven't seen a ball shoot at Lord's for years. Hence some of these long scores.

G.B. Ah ! And think what a difference the introduction of the cane splice has made ! There was no cane splice before about the middle 'fifties. Consequence was, your bat was always breaking, or stung your fingers and right up your arm as if your funny-bone was fractured. You were afraid to hit.

Quaestor. Very few people went to Lord's, I suppose, in those days ?

G.B. Oh, very few. As a boy, I've seen the University match with just a sprinkling of the public sitting round on the benches.

Quaestor. With their beer brought out from the public-houses in tankards, eh ?

G.B. (laughs). A good many of them. And a few people on horseback, looking on over their shoulders; and that was about all.

Quaestor. You could get into the M.C.C. easily enough then, I expect ?

G.B. Ah ! And for a good deal later. Vincent told me he happened to be in the pavilion, sometime in the 'sixties, and on his saying it seemed a nice sort of place, the friend who'd taken him in asked if he'd care to join ; because the committee was sitting at that moment and he was sure he could manage it. And he was there and then elected on the spot.

Quaestor. And how long did it take you ?

G.B. Only a week. From a Monday to a Monday.

Quaestor. Just imagine it ! Why, I was asking about a friend of mine the other day, and they told me it would take him at least forty-two years, and it might be sixty, if the candidates didn't die off at the proper rate.

G.B. Where the dickens do all the people come from ? Why, at the Test Match they've had 30,000. And look at the football crowds !

Quaestor. Same thing with the boat race. Denman, the judge, who rowed for Cambridge in '40, told me that when they started from Westminster Bridge to race to Putney, there were just a few people on the bridge who raised a half-hearted sort of cheer, and the bargees at Lambeth who shouted for them as they passed, but no sort of crowd along the banks.

G.B. Well, I always say that we old boys who were born before '30 are the lucky ones. We've had the best of it (*chuckles*). Particularly with the taxes. They can't tax us much longer, that's one comfort. And we had the best of India, too. I came home in '74 ; no plague, no famines, in my time. Not in Madras.

Quaestor. But you had to work pretty hard, I suppose ?

G.B. A certain amount of it ; more, I daresay, than I think for now. I know I came across an old draft report of mine the other

day—on the salt tax, I think it was—and I couldn't believe I'd ever written it (*laughs*). It was so wise, so weighty, so statesmanlike. I simply stared at it. Did I ever write that? I asked myself. But I most certainly had. (*As Quaestor rises*) Hullo! You're not going? (*Entreatingly*) Oh, stay and have another small 'baccy?

Quaestor. Half-past eleven, sir.—Are you leaving town soon? What are you going to do in August?

G.B. Go down to Brighton and live at the Club. There's always plenty of cricket to see, and I'm very fond of the place.

Quaestor. Not quite so fashionable as it was in your time.

G.B. No, I suppose not. You see, all the country-house people used solemnly to be sent there in the autumn, for their health's sake (*laughs*). Doctor's orders; the fall of the leaf was supposed to be unwholesome in the country.

Quaestor. It hasn't altered much, has it? Not Brighton proper?

G.B. Scarcely at all, except about where the Grand Hotel is. There was a fort there, on the sea front, and when we were in lodgings close by, in the summer of '62, I remember seeing the tall bicycles circling round and round it in the dusk. Very pretty and graceful it was, too (*helps him on with coat*). Now look here, I shall be back early in October; what do you say to dining with me at the Club, and going to see Lydia Kyasht dance at the Empire? You've never seen her, have you?

Quaestor. No. I shall be delighted.

G.B. Then that's a bargain. And if you come to Brighton, call for me at the Club and we'll go and see one of the Sussex matches. Sure to be pretty good.

Quaestor. Right, sir. I won't forget.

G.B. (on the doorstep). Nice night. What a summer!

SCENE II.—*It is late autumn, November, and nearly all the leaves have fallen in the Square. A heap of them are slowly burning, unattended, in a corner, like a funeral pyre, and their faint smoke is scarcely distinguishable in the grey fog, though the pungent acrid odour penetrates everywhere to warn us that the final clearance of the splendid summer is nearly at an end. It is the fall of the leaf, indeed, but the dear old G.B. will go no more to Brighton.*

The ever-hospitable door opens slowly and grudgingly, so differently from the usual cheerful wide swing, and the butler looks careworn and anxious. Yet it is to be noticed that for so long, in welcoming the

caller, has he worn a smile, that even now he can never altogether repress it. It still comes and goes, flickers, as he reports how ill the master is ; as though he really hoped it might not be necessary, after all, entirely to dismiss it. It strikes one as unfeeling, until one reflects how hard it must be in a day or two to drop the cheerful habit of more than twenty years. Yes, the master is very bad, worse than he knows ; his condition, in fact, is hopeless ; but he is dressed and down and will be glad to see me. And Quaestor passes through the hall into the familiar little smoking-room, where he now knows he will never again join his kindly host in a small 'baccy.

The old gentleman is fully dressed, and holds, almost seems to caress, a bunch of violets. He looks terribly shrunk ; the difference, as it were, between a glove on the hand and a glove thrown loosely on a chair, since Quaestor last saw him ; the generous mouth is pitifully loose, the kindly eye dim, the energetic nose sharper and more prominent. Only the beautiful silver hair is quite unaltered, as sprucely brushed and combed, as plentiful as when he was a lad. He holds out a languid hand, and as Quaestor takes it looks up at him questioningly, with something of the startled look of the sick child who begins to wonder whether he is really going to die.

Quaestor (with affected cheerfulness). Well, sir, this is rather bad. This doesn't look much like Lydia Kyasht.

G.B. (tries to smile). I was going to write to you. Brighton was no good. I caught a chill.

Quaestor. Too much cricket, eh ?

G.B. Don't know how I caught it. I can't eat anything ; just a few grapes (*languidly*). Rather a bore.

Quaestor. I'd no idea you'd been ill, till I heard it accidentally the other day. We were late in getting back.

G.B. I've been meaning to write ; I hadn't forgotten. But the only thing I've seen is 'The Perplexed Husband' ; took a couple of nieces ; enjoyed it immensely. And that's all. (*Rouses himself.*) I say—I wanted to ask you—I couldn't remember—you didn't come to my party, did you ?

Quaestor. In April ? No, we couldn't ; 'cos of the mumps.

G.B. (with almost a laugh). I remember. What a bore ! Well, I'm glad it came off all right. Celebrate—hundred years, you know, since the governor and mother were married.

Quaestor. Yes, April 1811. A son doesn't often celebrate that.

G.B. (ruminates). Mother didn't want to marry him ; she was

more than twenty years younger, and cried dreadfully. But her people told her she'd have to ; there were such a lot of them at home, and the governor was well off. So they were married sure enough, in the City, and mother never regretted it. It was a very happy marriage. Mother often told me. And I was the youngest ; came ten years after Fred, when the nursery was all shut up. So they had to open it again (*chuckling faintly*). The governor was horribly annoyed. But you came to our golden wedding ?

Quaestor. Of course.

G.B. We were married in Madras Cathedral, in '53. Did I ever tell you how it came off ?

Quaestor. No. How ?

G.B. I'd danced with her a good deal, you know ; but, of course, I hadn't dared think of her seriously. She was so much admired. Then I had to go away, and didn't come back again to Madras for two years. Soon after I got back, somebody said to me, ' I say, my boy, what about Miss O'N—— ? she's always talking of you, asking when you're coming back.' Well, I thought, that's rather astonishing ; wonder if he's speaking the truth ? Anyway, faint heart !— So I proposed. (*A long pause.*) And even now there are some of her papers I've never dared look through. There's a davenport—

(*And while he mutters and ruminates, staring into the gas fire, Quaestor recalls the last time he saw the devoted old couple together ; the old gentleman holding the beautiful old lady's delicate hands, looking up in her pretty aquiline worn face, trying to tell her in his loving enveloping glance all he owes her, all the comfort, the happiness, the joy. And Quaestor remembers, too, how the old lady used so often to drive down to the Club, to bring him back to tea ; and how she once told him that her heart still beat as she looked out for ' that dear grey head ' in the Club window, where he was always waiting for her. They have not been parted long—little more than two years ; and now evidently G.B. thinks, dreams, of nothing but their meeting. Are there so many married couples that look forward to that, after fifty-six years of close companionship ? Meantime, the gas fire hisses softly ; the only sound, it seems, in all London.*)

Quaestor (rises). Well, sir, I'm told I mustn't stay.

G.B. Thank you so much for coming. Everyone's most extraordinary kind. I can't understand it ; the way they come and call, and leave me flowers !—

Quaestor. How else can any of us repay the kindness and hospitality of so many years ?

G.B. (rather startled, as if that had never occurred to him, and with something of his old cheerful manner). Good Lord! Who wants repayment? You might as well offer to pay for the cod and oyster sauce. As if it isn't enough, to come and cheer one up at dinner. It's I who ought to be grateful. (He holds Quaestor's hand gently, lingeringly, so different from the usual vigorous grasp, and with his head lying back looks up at him with the puzzled questioning glance. Then, as if finding the answer to the question he almost seems to expect from Quaestor, he murmurs) I'm feeling pretty happy—pretty happy—. Good-bye.

(At the door, Quaestor turns and sees that he is already forgotten. The old gentleman is staring into the gas fire, interrogating it. A piece of the glowing asbestos falls with a tinkle, and he slightly moves his head towards it, as though it were a voice, a message of hope and assurance, and he were trying to catch the real meaning of the fragile utterance. In the hall the butler is fingering the innumerable cards of inquiry on the slab outside the dining-room door, arranging them deftly as though proud of their number. With a shake of the head and in silence, he softly opens the front door and lets the Quaestor out, and for the last time, into the penetrating odours of the grey fog of the Square.)

WALTER FRITH.TM

FATHER MICHAEL.

BY JOHN BARNETT.

THROUGH the tangled wildness of a West African forest a little party was pushing its slow way. It consisted of four native carriers, a white trader, and his gigantic negro body servant. Carson, the trader, was long and lean, with narrow shoulders, but a general suggestion of tough, wiry strength. His lined and craggy face was distinctly plain, but the rather sleepy eyes were honest and kindly and the firm mouth was above the average in quality. His red hair had been faded by scorching sunshine, and fever and privation had robbed his gaunt body of every ounce of superfluous flesh. The condition of his garments, to a critical eye, left much to be desired.

They were stained and green with the half-dried filth of swamps, and ragged from the thorns of countless thickets. The forest seemed to take toll of its invaders at every step. The going was cruelly rough and trying. From trunk to trunk of the great trees there swept a network of tough fleshy creepers to offer a barrier tiresome and endless. Far and far above, the tangled leaves and branches formed a roof well-nigh impenetrable to light. The little party struggled on in a perpetual gloom, save when an occasional vivid bar of sunshine, piercing the matted foliage, struck down like a naked sword. The heavy air of the forest was oven-like. All freshness seemed to have been baked from it in those close, silent depths, and a cool breeze was a gift of the gods not to be looked for. Carson's thin ragged clothes were sticking maddeningly even to his tough, gaunt frame, and the sweat gleamed upon the hard muscular bodies of his servants. So they ploughed on, with every nerve and sinew crying out for rest, and a sudden check came as a relief to the grim monotony of that heart-breaking march.

The native carriers in advance had halted and were chattering together.

'What's up, Imbono ?' Carson asked.

Imbono went forward to investigate, if need be with vivid blasphemy, and his master leaned thankfully for a moment with closed eyes against a giant tree. His head was splitting and his

eyeballs felt red hot. A recent bout of fever had sapped even his tough, seasoned strength.

Imbono returned all too soon with his report.

'Leopard trap, sar, and some one lib for fall inside it,' he said woodenly.

Carson roused himself, and a few paces took him to where a ragged opening yawned in the layer of earth and branches strewed above a deep-dug pit. From the depths there came a low, monotonous murmur which puzzled Carson.

He bent above the opening.

'Hullo, down there!' he called. 'Are you hurt?'

From below a voice answered, speaking in perfect English, but with a marked foreign accent.

'A spike has pierced my leg. I shall be a thousand times obliged by your assistance.'

They cleared away the earth and branches, and in the gloom of the trap could distinguish a small dark-clad figure huddled in a strained position and the gleam of a white face. Imbono unwound a cord from his waist and Carson was lowered into the pit. It was as the victim of the trap had said. A blunt spike had pierced the muscles of his right calf, and he had been unable to free himself. He lay twisted as he had fallen.

'I'm afraid I shall have to hurt you,' Carson said.

The wounded man laughed faintly. 'Do not fear, sir; I shall be only grateful. And it is a fact that I am now in some little pain.'

'My word, yes, I'll bet you are!' Carson answered, and proceeded with firm but gentle hands to free the pierced limb. The operation, painful as it must have been, wrung no sound save a faint gasp from the stranger.

'You've got pluck,' Carson muttered admiringly.

The other man laughed once more, even more faintly.

'Indeed, I can lay claim to little courage,' he murmured.

'We must get you up before we can see to it,' Carson said.

He made fast the cord and assisted from below as the men hauled from above. Then he himself was pulled to the surface. And for the first time he realised that the man whom he had rescued was a priest.

He had apparently collapsed and was lying at the foot of a great tree. His black robe was stained and frayed and torn. He was a very small man with tiny hands and feet, and lean almost to emaciation. His wrinkled face was the colour of old ivory,

and was lit by a pair of big dark eyes. It was an ugly face, judged by ordinary standards. Its features were commonplace and irregular, and the mouth was wide and crooked. The nose, which could never have been Grecian or imposing, had received permanent injury from a cruel blow. But looked at in another way the face was beautiful. For if ever simple humour and patient faith and boundless courage found expression in a human countenance it was in the haggard face of that little priest.

Carson knelt beside him and was received with a feeble smile.

He examined the ugly gash.

'I've had some little experience of wounds,' he said. 'If you will allow me, I had better put in a few stitches.'

'I shall be most grateful,' the little man answered. 'Somehow or other I must be—what would you say?—patched up. I am bound upon an errand of importance.'

'I am afraid you will have to delay it,' Carson said, rather drily, taking a little case from his pocket.

'Ah no, my errand brooks no delay.'

'But if you can't walk—' Carson objected, threading a needle with his long, sinewy fingers.

'If I must go upon my hands and knees I must fulfil my errand,' the little priest said very simply.

It seemed no moment for argument. Carson cleansed the wound and then stitched it up to the best of his ability. As he had said, he had had some little experience of rough surgery, but he was well aware that his want of skill must render the operation exceedingly painful. But the little priest bore it in stoical silence, forcing his pale lips to smile. When the bandage had been adjusted he spoke faintly but with characteristic courtesy.

'I do not know how to thank you, sir. I have interrupted your march by my misfortune—'

'There is no need of thanks,' Carson answered brusquely. 'It is a pleasure to help a man with your grit.'

The priest raised a deprecating hand. His yellow face was very serious. 'Grit? That is courage, is it not? But, sir, you are indeed mistaken. I am not brave at all—'

His head drooped forward and he fainted away.

'Just like me,' Carson muttered with annoyance. 'Standing by like a fool, and never thinking that the poor little devil would collapse. He can't be very strong, for all his gameness. Where's the brandy, Imbono?'

The small patient swiftly revived. He sat up with just a suggestion of colour in his ivory cheeks.

' You see ! I am weak and cowardly,' he murmured.

Carson shrugged his shoulders. ' You've been through tortures, I fancy, in that beastly pit. I've come near to falling in one myself once or twice.'

' The time did seem long,' the little man admitted simply. ' I occupied myself by going through my office for the day. It helped me to forget the pain.'

' Ah, that was what I heard,' Carson said. ' I wondered what you were saying to yourself down there. Well, it might be worse.'

' Indeed it might. I am most thankful. With an hour or two of rest I can renew my journey. But you, sir,—I must not add to my obligation by keeping you.'

' I'm going to camp here for the night,' Carson answered. ' But you talk of renewing your journey ? You were making for the coast, I suppose, and we might go together—'

' But no,' the priest answered. ' I am journeying eastward.'

Carson whistled. ' I was going inland myself, but I judged it advisable to turn back. I suppose you are not aware that the natives are "out" all along the river. They mean bad mischief. Every village is buzzing like a wasps' nest. You can't go forward, sir, even if you were fit to travel.'

' I can and I must,' the priest answered placidly.

' I think you do not realise the danger,' Carson persisted, and the little man smiled gently.

' I am not without experience of this country and its perils,' he said.

Carson looked at him curiously.

' Are you, by any chance, Father Michael ? ' he asked.

The priest bowed. ' That is my name,' he answered. ' And yours, sir ? '

Carson told him.

' If you are Father Michael, it is not for me to presume to advise you,' he added. ' But here is Imbono with supper. We can talk later about your journey.'

As they ate their simple meal, Carson could not refrain from a curious study of his guest. They had never chanced to meet before, but by reputation Father Michael was well known to him. For far and wide the little priest was famous. The flock to which he ministered was scattered throughout a vast and savage district.

From lonely store to store he journeyed, welcomed by every white man whatever his religion or its lack, and hated with superstitious fury by most natives. The witch doctors to a man regarded him as a dangerous rival. Plots innumerable had been laid to bring about his death by torture. It was not only his death that was desired. His courage was indisputable, beyond all question. And the heart and brain of a man of undoubted valour are invaluable for certain purposes of ju-ju. . . .

Death had walked closely at Father Michael's side for many a year. But he seemed to possess a charmed life. That was, indeed, the witch doctors' own explanation of his escapes. Only a man in possession of a most potent charm could have thwarted their enmity for so long. They hungered to win that charm. But so far the little priest had gone his way entirely careless of all peril. His adventures and escapes, the moments when he had outfaced death by a display of cool courage that appealed to superstition as the divinity of madness,—an account of these matters would have filled a lengthy book. But Father Michael seldom spoke of his venturings. He did not appear to treat seriously the knife-edged chances to which he subjected his lean, frail body. It was his habit to joke mildly at the shortcomings of his own physique. It was only other people's lives and bodies that he took seriously.

Father Michael fumbled for his snuff-box and extended it to his host. Carson excused himself smilingly and filled a pipe.

The little priest inhaled a huge pinch of snuff with simple enjoyment. He had eaten sparingly, but the meal appeared to have restored his strength miraculously. Carson guessed shrewdly that he had neglected the needs of his body for many hours.

'And now about your journey, Father,' he said. 'It is really out of the question. I know, of course, from what I have heard of you—'

Father Michael smiled with the simplicity of a child.

'Have you indeed heard of me?' he asked. 'Now I wonder what it is that you have heard? There are some, I believe, who are kind enough to speak well of my poor singing. Have men spoken to you of that, my son?'

Carson shook his head.

'You shall hear it and judge for yourself,' promised Father Michael, and without more ado he raised his voice and sang.

If you could call it singing, that is. The little man's voice was almost ludicrous. Carson judged that he could possess no ear

at all. His singing voice seemed to consist of an irregular series of shrill squeaks ! Through them there persisted, as it were, the shadowy suggestion of the air of a well-known hymn.

'It is my one gift,' said Father Michael simply, as the performance ended. 'A man, as I hold, has no right to conceal his gifts, more especially if he can give pleasure to others. Many have confessed to pleasure in my singing.'

Carson made haste to add his own tribute to those others. He could well understand why Father Michael's hearers had lied as he was lying. The little man appeared to possess this one vanity and delusion. And it did but make him the more lovable.

'It was of your rashness that I have heard, Father,' he went on when Father Michael had bowed his thanks. 'They say that no danger will turn you back from your duty—'

'Then men must speak too well of me—far too well,' Father Michael said soberly. 'It is my lasting shame that I am at heart but a sorry coward.'

And it was obvious that he believed his own words.

'Well, you manage to hide it pretty well,' Carson said drily. 'I happen to have heard men speak of you as the bravest man in West Africa. But never mind—we'll admit that they are mistaken, if you wish. What I'm getting at is, that it will be simple madness for you to go eastward just now.'

Father Michael permitted himself another pinch of snuff.

'It is a promise,' he said. 'And such a promise as I dare not break. Ah, Mr. Carson, it would take more courage to break that promise for sake of my own wretched safety, than it needs to go eastward ! But let me tell you of my errand. Do you know Fernandez's store on the river some thirty miles from here ?'

'Yes, I just know it,' Carson answered. 'Fernandez married, didn't he, not long ago ?'

'Yes, Juanita is her name. She is only a girl, all unfitted for these wilds, frail and delicate, like a sweet dark flower. All her life she has lived in towns, until Fernandez met her. They love, Mr. Carson, in a fashion that it is good to see, but she has not been very happy, that little Juanita. The great river, the stinking swamps, the wild forest and the wild dark men have terrified her. Fernandez scarcely knew what he was doing when he brought her to these wilds. And yet—they love each other. I was there two months ago, and I could see how things were. She has been often ill, she longs for other white faces, she is terrified when she must be left alone. It had all worn her to a shadow. Fernandez—he is

a good fellow, but he did not quite understand. There are many men who do not quite understand. But it is only because they are very young and strong and full of courage. An old man like me, who has always been something of a coward, can see more clearly.'

Father Michael took snuff once more. His face was very earnest, but there was, as ever, a flicker of humour in his old, dark eyes. The heat of the day was past, and the fire by which they sat was pleasant enough. Through a ragged opening in the tangled leaves far overhead a great white star flashed from the velvety blackness.

'Yes,' agreed Carson very gravely. 'I am something of a coward myself. And sometimes we cowardly people can understand.'

'She spoke to me. I took it as a high compliment that she spoke, for she is one who makes no complaints. But she knew that I would not condemn any weakness, being so weak myself. She had no thought of failing Fernandez, although she knew that he would take her back to the town, if that would be for her happiness. But she would not think of that. As I have said, they love each other, those two young people. But she had one great fear. It was lest she should be really ill, here in these wilds, with no woman, not even a priest, to aid. And so I made her a solemn promise that I would come to her, if it were in my power, when she had need of me. And two days ago word came to me down the river that her need was grave. I started at once, and I would have been with her by dawn, it may be, but for the misfortune of that leopard trap.'

Carson shrugged his shoulders.

'Perhaps it was good fortune in disguise. I gravely doubt if you would have reached Fernandez's by the dawn. It may well be that you would have gone upon a longer journey by a path of some little pain.'

Father Michael laughed very softly.

'This old body!' he said with a quaint gesture of his tiny yellow hands; 'it is worth so little, so very little! It is to be remembered that Juanita is young and her need is great.'

'It is but going to certain death,' Carson said very earnestly. 'Is your life not of some value to many? Father, you must not go!'

Father Michael drew from his shabby robe a handkerchief of quite surprising delicacy and dusted his slender fingers with dainty care. His eyes were twinkling.

‘ My son, I have to thank you for assistance, for hospitality, and for advice of value. An old man may be permitted to reject advice without courtesy. He has given so much in his time—when he also was young ! ’

Carson laughed, even against his will.

‘ What will you do, Father ? ’ he asked.

‘ I start at dawn,’ said Father Michael gently.

When the light was grey and the white mists were rising they unrolled themselves from their blankets and swallowed the coffee which Imbono had prepared. Carson was in a mood of unusual irritation, but Father Michael was, as ever, placidly cheerful. If his leg were painful he made nothing of it. He shook hands with Carson.

‘ May all good attend you, my son,’ he said. ‘ For myself, I am assured that all will be well with me.’

‘ I wish I thought so,’ Carson almost snapped.

‘ Whatever chances, all will be well,’ the little priest said calmly, and without more ado he set out upon his journey.

Carson stood and watched him limp away. He looked very small and frail in the grey light. Carson was never sure if he obeyed a sudden impulse or acted upon a resolve that had fixed itself overnight. He was accustomed to impute the worst motives to himself.

At last, as he watched, he suddenly spoke aloud : ‘ Hang it, I can’t let him go alone ! I should feel a cur all my life. But it’s dashed madness all the same ! ’

He turned to Imbono with a few curt orders, which Imbono received with marked sullenness. It was never to his liking to be separated from his master. But Carson permitted no argument.

He left the camp and swung away through the trees after the little priest.

Father Michael turned at sound of his step.

‘ I also am going to Fernandez’s, Father,’ Carson said curtly.

Father Michael lifted his eyebrows.

‘ Is not the decision somewhat sudden, my son ? ’ he asked.

‘ And what of the danger ? Only a matter of pressing urgency—’

Carson laughed. ‘ The matter is urgent enough,’ he said drily.

‘ It is a little question of vanity. I can’t let you go alone.’

‘ But it is needless,’ Father Michael protested. ‘ I must go, for I have given my promise ; but why should two lives be risked ? ’

Carson had lost all his irritation. His manner was cheerfully

genial. That was always his way when he was about to walk with open eyes into a tight place.

'You are obstinate, Father, if I may say so,' he said. 'But I am rather obstinate too. I'm coming with you, if you have no strong personal objection.'

For a moment Father Michael stared at him with troubled eyes. Then a sudden brilliant smile swept across his wrinkled face.

'Come, my son!' he said, and the two went forward side by side.

Their progress was not rapid, for it was regulated by Father Michael's speed. Carson knew that the little man must be enduring something not far short of torture. His limp grew more pronounced, and he struggled on with tight shut lips. But his courage held superbly. He made no complaint, and he would admit to but little pain when Carson questioned him.

'I think at times that there is no such thing as physical pain, if one has but the will to think of other things,' he said with a whimsical smile. 'I am thinking now of Fernandez and his wife. They must be themselves in some little danger, do you not think so, Mr. Carson?'

'Undoubtedly,' Carson answered. 'But the store is strong, with the river upon its front. And Fernandez's native boys are to be trusted. I think the chances are that they will be safe.'

'When shall we reach the store?' Father Michael asked. 'I am but a poor walker to-day, I must confess.'

'It is a wonder to me that you can keep going at all,' Carson said bluntly. 'We ought to make the store some time to-morrow morning. But—it's more a question of if than when!'

And he laughed cheerfully.

Father Michael, limping forward with his lined face more colourless than usual, and heavy drops upon his forehead, made answer with entire serenity—

'If it be God's will, we shall reach the store, though all the tribes in Africa should bar the way. If we are cut off, it is still His will. But I confess to a certain anxiety upon your account, Mr. Carson.'

Carson laughed once more. 'Please don't worry about me, Father,' he said. 'I'm a timid man in a general way; but it's—it's difficult to be really cowardly in your company, somehow!'

The little priest only answered with his quaint smile, and the strange pair plodded steadily on.

Father Michael was apparently a stranger to caution, but Carson insisted that they should observe a certain prudence. Where the bush was thickest they travelled perforce by the winding native paths, but when possible they steered a way by compass through the virgin forest. It was about midday when they had their first clear hint of danger. Carson's ears were sharp. Suddenly he laid his hand upon Father Michael's shoulder, and dragged him down into a thick clump of bush.

'Keep quiet!' he whispered. 'There's a war party coming!' And from where they crouched they saw fifty or sixty natives, armed with spears and ancient guns, go by. They were led by a gaunt chief magnificently arrayed in an ill-fitting coat of purple velvet. When they were out of hearing Carson rose to his feet with a dry smile.

'Our luck is in,' he said. 'If they had seen us, well—we should never have reached Fernandez's!'

'And I say that God's hand is over us. But we mean the same,' the little priest said gently. 'I think that we shall reach Fernandez's by dawn. I shall need no sleep to-night.'

Carson glanced at the little man's pain-wrung face and fragile figure.

'Certainly, pluck has nothing to do with brute strength,' he muttered. 'Try leaning on my shoulder, Father, for a little while at least.'

'Indeed, Mr. Carson, I need no help,' Father Michael answered. 'But with all my heart I thank you for your gentle courtesy.'

Then they resumed their weary march, and Carson, although he did not voice the thought, could only wonder whimsically how long their luck would stand by them. It seemed to him that they were like doomed men walking beneath a sword that must fall in but a little while. And yet—oddly enough, he never for a moment found himself wishing that he had let Father Michael go his way alone.

When the blow fell it was without warning. A single musket-shot bellowed thunderously through the forest, and Carson sank upon his knees.

'I've got it, Father, through the leg!' he gasped. 'Run, if you can. That was a long-range shot.'

But Father Michael bent above him as though he had not heard.

'Are you much hurt, my son?' he asked.

'No, but I'm out of this game,' Carson said angrily. 'Run,

man, run ! There's no sense in staying. They may not follow you when they see me.'

Father Michael smiled. 'I would not run if I could,' he said quietly, and he drew out his handkerchief to bandage Carson's wound.

'Here they come !' Carson said pettishly. 'It—it seems a dashed waste !'

There was a patter of feet, a burst of triumphant howls, and thirty natives broke through the trees upon the helpless pair.

Through the noisy discussion that followed Father Michael with cool, capable hands did what he might for Carson's hurt. It was painful enough, and crippling, at any rate for the time, but not serious.

'What will they do with us ?' the priest asked some minutes later. The two had been pulled to their feet, and, each between two brawny natives, were being dragged through the forest.

'They are taking us to a village,' Carson answered drily. 'I heard them mention a witch doctor. You will understand what that may mean.'

'We are still in God's hands,' Father Michael answered calmly.

It was an hour later when the two spoke together once more. They had been received with indescribable clamour in the walled village. The lean painted witch doctor had inspected the prisoners with evil, gloating eyes, the white men, women, children, and cur dogs had howled about them in a triumphant ring. Then they had been bound and flung into a hut to await their fate.

'These poor people,' the priest murmured whimsically. 'They show little respect or fear for the mighty white men.'

'That's so,' Carson answered grimly. 'It looks like a pretty serious native rising. No doubt they have their grievances. They need a sharp lesson, and they'll get it all right, but—it won't advantage *us* much.'

'I suppose not,' Father Michael said simply. 'What will be our fate ?'

'As far as I could make out, through the din, we have roughly another hour of life before us,' Carson answered.

'And how are we to die ?'

'By fire, at the tree of sacrifice,' Carson said, with simple directness.

The little priest shrugged his shoulders.

'So. It is God's will. But I grieve for you, my son. I know well that you did but accompany me because of the chivalry in your heart. You English, many of you, are chivalrous. But I feel that I am responsible for your death.'

'Please don't think that, Father,' Carson said quietly. 'I came to please myself, because it seemed contemptible to let you go alone. And—it's not a moment for pretty speeches, so you will understand that I mean what I say—it seems to me to be something of an honour to be your companion.'

'You are what they call an English gentleman,' Father Michael answered. 'I have met men like you before, clean-handed and modest, making little of their own high courage. It helps my weakness to have you with me in this trial.'

Carson only laughed gently at the words. When the priest spoke again it was with deep sadness.

'I am thinking of Juanita. She is waiting for me, relying upon my word, and I shall not come. She leaned upon me, and it is possible that she will die. If her young life could but have been saved, it would have mattered nothing what happened afterwards to me.'

'I don't think I have ever met anyone quite like you, Father,' Carson remarked, with genuine wonder. 'Don't you ever think of yourself at all? Haven't you a thought to spare for your own fix?'

Father Michael emitted a faint chuckle in the gloom.

'In truth, if I dwelt upon my fix I should prove myself a sorry coward, and disgrace myself in your eyes, my son. I am weak, and I shrink from the thought of a death of pain. And yet—well, the path of torment we shall tread will be short, and beyond it are—better things than those we leave.'

Carson made no direct answer. He could not speak with ease or readiness about religion. After a while he said :

'I'm no braver than other men, rather below the average, in fact. I only hope I shall contrive not to play the cur before these natives.'

And Father Michael said simply, 'I think that to both of us will be given strength.'

Then they lay in silence for the little while that remained to them, each thinking his own thoughts. Carson's were concerned with a girl. It is probable that nine out of every ten men who face death with a clear brain are thinking of a woman.

Apparently Father Michael was thinking of one also, although in another fashion. For when their guards had come for them, when their legs had been unbound and they had been dragged into the open air, when a yelling procession had been formed about them and the village had been left behind, he spoke aloud, and Carson caught the words. 'Poor Juanita! Poor child! If I could but have gone to her first.'

Carson stared at the little man and marvelled. Such selflessness in the very face of a hideous death was beyond his understanding.

He himself was thinking of many matters, trivial and otherwise. How dark was the sky! A heavy storm was surely coming. Was a death by burning very painful? Many martyrs, delicate women among them, had borne it bravely. But a man had better think of something else! He wondered what a certain Clare was doing. He would have given—oh! very much, to see her again. Her face was always oddly vivid to him. A man had only to close his eyes to see her clearly, clearly . . . He would have liked to send a message to her, but that was not to be. Better not think about Clare too much, perhaps. Had they far to go? No, the trees were thinning out before them. He saw a circular clearing of bare earth trodden by many feet. This would be where the natives held their dark revels and unspeakable ceremonies. Carson squared his lean shoulders instinctively. The time of bitter trial was come.

In the centre of the clearing rose the gnarled, withered trunk of a tree, blackened by many fires. The prisoners were bound against it, side by side. Dry brushwood and heavier faggots were piled about them in a ring. Then began incantations and weird dancing, and a ceaseless, horrible, nerve-racking din. And all the while the sky grew blacker, and, although the evening was still young, the light was failing steadily. The prisoners fronted their tormentors with steady courage, standing straightly in their bonds and longing for this agony of waiting to cease.

'Goodbye, Father,' Carson said suddenly. 'Time's up at last.'

'Goodbye, my son,' Father Michael answered. 'I pray you to forgive me!'

'There is nothing to forgive,' Carson said. 'But if you would care to give a thoroughly sinful man your blessing—'

Father Michael, clear-voiced and calm, murmured his blessing as the witch doctor drew near, flaming torch in hand. And at that moment the first heavy drops of rain came hissing down.

'My word!' Carson muttered. 'There's going to be a reprieve!'

And so it proved. As the brushwood caught, and the long, lean, yellow flames began to leap and crackle, the storm broke fairly. The rain sluiced down in a black, roaring cataract. The flames were choked out beneath it in a moment. The natives cowered away for shelter under the trees, and the respited prisoners stood alone in the clearing, dripping and shivering in their bonds.

The storm was brief as it was violent. Carson spoke, gasping for breath, as the clouds swept away and the sun peered out.

'We're still alive, Father, and it will puzzle them to find wood dry enough for our roasting to-day!'

'Yes, God has spared us wonderfully, for His own high reasons,' the little priest answered with reverence.

The thwarted natives emerged from cover and gathered about their prisoners. There followed a clamorous discussion in which the grim-eyed witch doctor finally bore down all opposition. Carson listened with eager attention to the words that decided their fate. He gave an exclamation.

'What will they do to us?' Father Michael asked steadily.

'Some of them were for sparing us,' Carson answered. 'They seemed to think that the gods meant us to live when they sent rain so opportunely; but that old ruffian, the witch doctor, would not hear of mercy. He seems glutinous for blood. He says that fire will not harm us, and that now they must try what water will do! We are to be tied to posts beside the river and drowned by the rising tide. The tide is making up now, it appears. Everything is propitious. They are going to take us to the river now.'

'It is still God's will,' was all that Father Michael said.

It was not far to the river. The prisoners were dragged thither with rough speed. Three posts rose up from the brown shallows. To two of them Father Michael and Carson were bound. Already the water reached to the priest's armpits, and it was rising fast.

'You will have the longer to live, my son, being the taller man,' Father Michael said calmly. 'I know not why, but I have the feeling that you may yet be saved. If you live, I pray you to go to Juanita and tell her that I would have kept my word.'

Carson gave his promise. 'But I see little chance for either of us,' he added. Father Michael did not seem to hear him. He was gazing before him with rapt, far-away eyes. There was a faint smile, as Carson always remembered, upon his colourless face.

The water had reached his shoulders. He was murmuring to himself, forgetful of Carson and the gloating natives who watched from the bank.

Carson just caught the words, ' Juanita ! Juanita ! my promise ! . . . I keep my promise ! . . .' The brown water rose steadily. It was near to Carson's shoulders now, tall man as he was. He heard beside him a strange, dreadful, choking sound, mercifully brief. He shut his eyes. . . .

He opened them, at the sound of a familiar yell. Four large canoes were dashing up the river towards him. He recognised Imbono in the bows of one, urging on the paddlers with savage threats. He saw little, dark, uniformed men and the gleam of rifles. It was difficult to realise that he was saved. . . .

Father Michael had been known and loved by the rescuers. He was beyond their aid, but they exacted a price for his murder, a grim and bitter price.

Carson came in the dawn to Fernandez's store. The young Portuguese trader stood aghast at his tidings.

' Father Michael dead, drowned about six o'clock last evening ? But—but that was when he came ! '

' Are you raving ? What do you mean ? ' Carson asked.

' He came here then, Father Michael himself ! Juanita was very ill, crying out for the Father. He had promised her to come. I had to leave her about six o'clock for a little while. When I came back Father Michael was in the room. He looked white and tired, and his old black gown was sorely torn. He bent above Juanita, and he soothed her as only he could do. His voice and his hands are—were—so very gentle. She slept at last quite peacefully, as she is sleeping now. Then he turned to me, " I have been permitted to keep my promise, Luiz Fernandez," he said. " But now I have to go upon a journey." And he blessed me—the little Father. He would not stay, so tired as he looked, and he would not eat. I watched him walk away among the trees. . . . I have been wondering. . . . But now you say that he was dead, that he died about that hour ! What in God's name does it mean ?

' It only means,' said Carson, very soberly, ' that he was permitted to keep his promise.'

ALFRED LYTTTELTON.

It is not a reminiscence ; it is just the slightest and simplest of impressions of Alfred Lyttelton, by one who was a little boy at Eton when he was a big boy clothed with unapproachable glory ; and since then, perhaps a score of meetings and talks, though under circumstances which made intimacy natural, so that I feel that I have lost an old friend and a real friend. What a trifle it is, and yet how much it seems, that we called each other by our Christian names !

Eton first ; the first service in chapel, and I feeling very small and obscure in the great building with its long rows of stalls, ranks of masters, the old spiky organ towering up to the huge far-off timbered roof ; the great absurd windows, and farther and farther away the long lines of those delicate clustered columns and mullions, on to the huge East window, with the white crucifix relieved against the dark overhung cloudy background.

The organ sounds ; the procession enters, the Sixth Form pass in, two rows of boys, Collegers and Oppidans side by side ; the Collegers diverge at once, at the entrance of the choir, to a sort of *siding* of their own. The Oppidans advance up the centre, all the congregation remaining seated. What old strong men they seemed to me then to be, though they were boys of eighteen and nineteen ; but they looked older in those days, because of the careful nurture of whiskers, like little sausages, down each cheek. I thought they must be infinitely learned and very severe ; hardly boys at all. And then, too, there was an odd custom, long since disused, that they should carry their tall hats—and they were very tall in those days—held by the brim, close to the chest, with the top just on a level with the chin. It gave a sense of awful solemnity, those ten figures, in step, gazing eastward over the tops of their hats, very stiff and upright. But in the middle came one to whom public appearances had nothing formidable about them. He swung his hat in his hand instead of carrying it upright. His light curly hair, his sparkling smiling eyes, his under-lip just thrust out, all gave a look of intense animation and activity. Who could the hero be ?—I soon found out ; it was Alfred Lyttelton, the unquestioned and undisputed king of the place, last of a long line of well-known brothers, and the most famous of all.

One saw him about the street and playing-fields, in glimpses and vignettes, always talking and laughing, or splashed and stained with mud in the football field, or striding to the wicket with his blue cap and sash ; always the easy centre of every scene, perfectly natural, unembarrassed, serene. I remember his great

shouts, and his huge laughter in the football field ; he never blamed his team, but always encouraged and applauded every bit of creditable play : the only boy who might do exactly as he liked, and about whom, in every relation of life, there was never a word said except in praise.

Then he left Eton ; but used to reappear for matches. I seem to see him in a funny little porkpie cap, keeping wicket for I Zingari, his long arms flashing miraculously in every direction, never in repose, always full to the brim of zest and good-nature and sociability.

Then came a later date, when I, an undergraduate myself, made friends to my endless surprise and delight with Miss Laura Tennant, soon to be Alfred's first wife. I despair of describing one who left so mysterious and ineffaceable an impression. She was very small and pale, and delicately made, and with an extraordinary beauty both of movement and expression. Was it possible, one asked oneself, for anyone to be so clever, so charming, so sympathetic as she appeared ? Yet the more one knew of her, the more one perceived it to be all true. She had hundreds of friends, yet she found time to see a shy and diffident boy, as I was, even to write letters. There never was anyone, it still seems to me, with whom it was so easy to talk on any subject in the world, grave or gay. She was full of humour, and yet in an instant she could be serious and tender, without any affectation or strain. She always remembered what one had been doing, what one had said. She understood everything, books and people alike, with an insight which was like genius. And I can recollect now how I was told carelessly at a breakfast-table that she was to marry Alfred. No wonder ! It seemed that for once, the perfect thing had happened.

I met him, I think for the first time, in her beautiful little sitting-room, which seemed so full of charming secrets, and fine mysteries, high up in the big house in Grosvenor Square ; and then in a single moment I seemed to be his friend as well.

That is nearly thirty years ago ; and since that time, I have just seen him at rare intervals, at a club, at a dinner party, at a match. But, one was always greeted with the same endearing welcome, 'A——, old man ! This is a good sight ! ' The amazing thing is that, considering all his friendships and alliances, all the resources he had at his disposal, one never had the smallest doubt of the cordial *intimité* of that welcome. It was not a trick or a manner ; one was just an old friend whom he desired to see, and whom he would gladly have seen oftener if it had been possible.

He grew greyer, leaner, more spare as work and cares multiplied. The lines came out on his big-boned expressive face ; the curly hair grew thinner ; but there was always the same overflowing zest and humour and delight about him. The published accounts of him, with all the detail about games and law-cases and politics, seem to me to have done very scanty justice to his great range of interest in persons and ideas. He never forced a subject in talk ; he always flung himself into any matter under discussion ; it was a joy to say anything which interested or amused him, to see his lip come out, his eyes flash, the little laughing wrinkles gather on his cheek, with a sidelong shake of the curly head, and his quick glance of appreciation.

And then there was the finest quality of all about him, his matchless modesty. I think I would say that he was the only man I have ever known, to whom success came, not in driblets, but in constant and ample handfuls, who was never for a single instant affected by it. In the best of men, there often comes a touch of complacency, of peremptoriness, of self-approval. Never in Alfred ! I never heard him tell a story to his credit, or indicate an exploit, or woo applause. There was never a trace of egotism about him ; he must have been subtly or grossly flattered, singled out, made much of, deferred to all his life long. Yet if one had met him, not knowing who he was, he was just a jolly Englishman, with the difference that he had not a vestige of English stiffness or solemnity. That modesty was, I think, the most beautiful trait in his nature, next to his abounding affection, and achieved by no effort, but by a simplicity of mind and heart that nothing could spoil.

Yet he could give an incisive enough little stroke, if needed. The scene is a country-house and a smoking-room. Two or three men discoursing, one a rather pompous Under-Secretary of State. Alfred and another are talking about some acquaintance with deep interest. 'Who is it you are speaking of ?' says the Under-Secretary. The name of a well-known millionaire comes up. 'Oh !' says the Under-Secretary with his nose in the air, 'I thought it was somebody interesting. I can't pretend to take an interest in a man simply because he is rich.' Alfred turns round with a beaming smile. 'Just a wee bit priggish, isn't it, old man ?' The Under-Secretary looks sharply at him, meets his smile ; the solemnity ebbs out of him, and he says sheepishly, 'Well, perhaps !'

Another scene. The marriage of an acquaintance is being discussed. 'Rather *aquiline*, isn't she ?' says one of the party. 'Well, yes, old man !' says Alfred. 'If you wish to know what I think, she seems to me to have a nose which is consistent with the truest friendship, but not consistent with love..'

Almost my last sight of him was in the big library of my club ; he came in, looking very cheerful and very tired. He cast himself into a chair, and presently slept. I went out, passing close by him, and did not intend to wake him ; but I thought he glanced at me, and stopped. Then he did wake, jumped up, 'Ah, old boy, I'm having a bit of a snooze ; wonderful place this to sleep in, to be sure—it's as good as a railway carriage !' And then followed ten minutes of lively talk, as if he had nothing else to do but to make me welcome.

There came his second most happy marriage, and a beautiful family life. Activities, responsibilities, honours fell thickly about him ; but there was no change in the perennially youthful spirit, the fine consideration for others, the eager enjoyment of life ; and then in a single week, all is over ; he suffered, and he suffered gallantly, as one knew he would, if there should be need. But mysterious and heart-rending as his death is, I am glad to feel that he passed from life as decisively and readily and buoyantly as he left the wicket, or went out of a law-court, his task done. To flash from life to death, with vigour unabated and energy undimmed, is one of the supreme felicities, and often granted to those who have fought best.

It is with no extravagance of emotion that I say this. There was some great writer—I forget who it was, and of whom he was speaking ; but he said of some notable man that if he had been asked to indicate some finest and most typical specimen of humanity to the inhabitants of another planet, he would have exhibited the man of whom he spoke. That, without the least exaggeration, is what I feel of Alfred Lyttelton. He had none of the faults of his age, his social standing, his profession, his education. As a rule, one has to praise a man with qualifications ; but I really know of no qualifications here. A man entirely and conspicuously successful, with the ball for ever at his foot, and yet generous, sweet-tempered, affectionate, and modest, though he lived life to the full, and had all its joys, all its rewards, enough of its sorrows, and none of its limitations. I do not care whether he ever had me in mind or not ; he never failed in any office of kindness or tenderness ; I feel enriched and encouraged by having known and loved him ; and in the recollection of such a life all petty elements fade and vanish and leave one face to face with the rarest and most beautiful possibilities of human nature at its truest and at its best.

THE MEDICINE OF DICKENS.

BY S. SQUIRE SPRIGGE, M.D.

IN a short article which appeared in the *CORNHILL* a year or so ago entitled 'Medicine in Fiction,' I essayed to show that the use of medicine by novelists followed certain tracks. The conclusions which I invited were briefly as follows: that the medical episode as an assistance to the working out of the plot was often well employed by the experienced novelist; that in such use of medicine pathological accuracy, though desirable, was only material if the author himself claimed scientific correctness; that the masters of fiction had often drawn excellent likenesses of the diseased subject, and had illustrated correctly the influence of disease upon communities, though they were not exempt from the commission of profound or comical errors; and that only in the rarest cases was any knowledge shown of the life led by the medical man—of the nature of his successes or the reason of his failures, of the significance attaching to his qualifications, or of the usual steps in his professional career.

Though some of my statements were challenged, the rather obvious truth of the conclusions was admitted generally; but almost everyone who was sufficiently interested in the questions to write about them, whether in the newspapers or to me, pointed out that I had omitted this or that striking example of the use of medicine in the novels of so and so. I knew that this would be said, for I knew that the examples which I had selected to prove the points were chosen arbitrarily; but how otherwise could a choice be made? The writers whose books were quoted were thoroughly well known, and many of the books must, I think, remain as permanent adornments of our literature; but other writers, as great or greater, were not alluded to. Scores of diseases which have been described in novels, written both by those writers whom I cited and those whom I omitted, were not brought into discussion; and it was obvious that any particular examples which I gave could be paralleled by others which might seem more to the point in connection with a particular disease, or more typical of an individual author's genius than those which I hit upon. Such a subject as the use of medicine in fiction, even within the narrow limitations set to my article—viz. that only well-known novelists writing in English or French would be quoted—must be completely

outside the scope of any one paper, if all the available evidence upon which any general conclusions are to be arrived at has to be given. For such a task a large book would be required, and I would not write such a book even if I had the knowledge and skill to write it very well; for I do not think that it would repay the trouble of reading. Too many examples of the same episode, too many repetitions of villainy with the same object and of virtue with the same reward, would be the result of the compilation. The use of medicine in the novels of Charles Dickens is in itself an ample subject for consideration—too large a subject, it will be seen, for this essay, if anything like the thoroughness postulated by my kindly critics be expected.

The length of many of the novels of Dickens, their multiplicity of episode and the vast quantity of characters introduced, make it certain that no one reader of his works would select, in illustration of any text or in support of any thesis, exactly the same passages from his works that another reader, equally his admirer, would decide to rely upon.

I have taken my examples of the use of medicine almost wholly from the long novels, and I know that I have not exhausted the mine. But I have been surprised at the amount of medicine contained in those works of Dickens which I have recently consulted, and in particular I have been surprised at his knowledge of the professional medical life of his day. Here he is ahead of most English writers, save those who happen also to have been medical men; while it is evidence of the wide area over which his kind and fantastic genius ranged, that this particular knowledge would not be claimed readily for him, so hidden away is it in the ramifications of his romances, so trifling are the things which display it, and so subordinate are the characters whose behaviour proves it.

But the medicine in Dickens's novels is nearly all of one large category. Who are the sick people in these novels is a question to which no certain answer can be given; for many characters go through his books, without a hint of physical suffering, who are so warped and twisted that they conform to no real standard of health, the deformities being as marked in their bodies as in their minds. It is in descriptions of mental disease that Dickens revels, but it is especially difficult to determine whether a particular person is definitely a lunatic, or merely an eccentric, or the victim of some obsession or self-delusion, utterly spoiling his or her intellectual balance.

Mrs. Nickleby's unnamed admirer is, with due allowance made

for the deliberate exaggeration of the comic side of lunacy, a fair picture. There may never have been a lunatic exactly like him, amorous failings taking as a rule a much more unpleasant shape; but there is no reason why a certificated patient should not behave in much the way that this elderly lover behaved.

Smike is an accurate and even terrible picture of the half-witted subject; hunger, humiliation, and pain have broken his spirit and the association with his condition of what is apparently chronic phthisis is accurate. But can Smike be considered madder than either Squeers or his daughter Fanny? And was not Newman Noggs in his long-cherished revenge nearly as mad as the Lothario in small-clothes?

The senility of the 'Father of the Marshalsea,' of old Chuffey who could only be recalled to life by Anthony Chuzzlewit's voice, and of grandmother Smallweed who required the stimulus of a blow from a cushion to arouse her; the religious madness of Lord George Gordon; and the congenital idiocy of Barnaby Rudge, and the weak-mindedness of 'Mr. Dick,' are all well delineated; but it is difficult to say that these characters, varying as they do in their manifestations of madness, and in the depth and seriousness of their delusions, are much more mentally unbalanced than Quilp, or even Mrs. Clennam. Barnaby Rudge is an interesting character, medically speaking, because in his case Dickens shows belief in the phenomenon known as telegony. Barnaby is born with a bloody mark upon his wrist owing to his mother a few days before his birth having clutched the wrist of his murderous father in her terror.

Edgar Allan Poe, criticising the episode in a review, pointed out that this was probably a slip on Dickens's part, who intended to make the murderer clutch the wife's wrist. Poe's surmise is shrewd; but in either event the result belongs, as far as Barnaby is concerned, to the realms of imagination, and not to any accepted occurrence in heredity.

The difference immediately to be noted between the characters whom Dickens labels definitely as insane and those whom he leaves us to label as we choose, is that the latter are more monstrously deformed.

Squeers, squat and dirty, with but one eye and 'the blank side of his face much wrinkled and puckered up'; Fanny Squeers, with her harsh voice and squint; Quilp, 'so low in stature as to be quite a dwarf though his head and face were large enough for the body of a giant'; Flintwinch, whose 'neck was so twisted that the knotted ends of his white cravat usually dangled under one ear,' and whose

swollen and suffused features gave him 'a weird appearance of having hanged himself at one time or other and of having ever since gone about halter and all, exactly as some timely hand had cut him down'; Noggs, 'with goggle eyes, whereof one was a fixture, a rubicund nose, a cadaverous face,' who 'rubbed his hands slowly over each other, cracking the joints of his fingers and squeezing them into all possible distortions,'—all these people present the outward appearance of well-marked types of mental defect or degeneracy, and Dickens was intuitively right to make them act in defiance of recognised standards of reason. But not a doctor drawn in Dickens's pages would have had this sound psychological instinct. For none of them was learned, or a lover of learning. Dickens had it from cultivation of his powers of observation as much as from the intuition that distinguishes his genius.

As no one can say exactly where physiology ends and psychology begins, the connecting links between psychology and medicine must often be very close; we know this now as a commonplace, but fifty years ago it represented the teaching of only advanced thinkers. To Mr. Chilling, Mr. Jobling, and Dr. Parker Peps such words would have meant nothing. Psychological modes of thought assist in the exposition of therapeutics, and the merely materialist physician is nowadays bound to fall behind in the ranks of his profession. The medical men in Dickens's pages were all materialists—of this we may feel sure; but Dickens himself had a very close appreciation of the union between physiology and psychology. None of his medical men are ever described as seeing any evidence of this union, and it often happens that characters do not appear in his books as definitely diseased people, requiring medical attention, when they are really at least half-mad. But Dickens makes them act madly, and justifies doing so, in many cases, by putting their cranky intelligences into physical frames of the sort which we now recognise as often accompanying degeneracy.

I have purposely dwelt upon Dickens's treatment of the mentally unbalanced, because he introduced these characters into every one of his books, and did so with skill and discrimination. The picturesqueness of the unbalanced mind appealed to him; he felt towards the crazy and unexpected sentiment and emotions of 'Mr. F.'s aunt,' Miss Havisham, or 'Mr. Dick' as he felt towards a weed-grown churchyard, the oozing planks of a derelict wharf, or the sagging façade of a slum. The ruin, he deplored; the message of ineffectiveness and even of terror conveyed, he recognised; but the attraction of mystery was the predominant emotion with him. The

usual diseases he described hardly at all, and when he employed them in his narratives he did so merely as an assistance to the story, taking little pains to obtain accurate information upon the symptoms and pathological history. The only instance when I remember him to have displayed any desire to justify the correctness of his medicine concerns the death of Krook, but Krook died of spontaneous combustion, and the pathological details could not be accepted by any medical men. For his account of the death of Krook he will go bail, but takes no credit to himself in having drawn, in *Dick Swiveller*, not only a most laughable character, but a wonderful portrait of the feverish and irresponsible alcoholic subject, the man who drinks to satisfy no craving for drink, but simply to ensure that 'the fire of soul is kindled at the taper of conviviality, and the wing of friendship never moults a feather.' It is these topers whom a good restricting influence can entirely reform, and that *Dick* should find moral and material salvation with his 'Marchioness' is a sound piece of medical history.

The death of Krook was dramatic, terrible, picturesque, and fitting, and as such should be let go free of all criticism. Improbable it certainly was, but this fact did not affect the story in any way. It was an isolated, if highly unusual, event; and it does not seem to me that Dickens's use of spontaneous combustion was other than perfectly fair in fiction. The story did not depend on Krook's dying in this way; it is not suggested that it was a usual form of death, and no one considers that a novelist ought to be a pathologist. When, however, the book was published, Dickens took the field in defence of his medical learning, resenting some criticism by George Henry Lewes, himself, by the way, no pathologist and an inaccurate if learned man. He demolished Lewes, but convinced no one; and the verdict of medicine to-day is that there is no such thing as spontaneous combustion. But the occurrence was, in my opinion, a legitimate episode in a novel, and Marryat used it with some effect in '*Jacob Faithful*,' his best novel in many respects. The public could not be seriously misled, save such an unreasonable portion of them as should essay to quote Dickens as an ultimate pathological authority; while the warning against drink and dirt conveyed by Krook's dreadful end has a salutary object.

The medicine of the sick mind, of the disordered intellect, and of unbalanced emotion permeates Dickens's novels; of the named diseases he makes little or no mention. When it was necessary for his story to plan a murder by poison, or to remove a superfluous

character by a zymotic, he does not specify the drug or the fever. He had some knowledge as to the symptoms and course of pulmonary tuberculosis, and was acquainted with the general features of malaria, though he blundered in several ways in his description of the malady. The circumstances of the crimes with violence, which are prominent in several works, do not follow surgical rules, though he was never absolutely wrong, that I can recall. But save in the instance of Krook's death he never insisted that he was absolutely right, being content to use medicine as an aid to the plot and nothing more, and believing that he had drawn very little upon it for the success of his romances. In truth his books are replete with sound medical observation.

To pass to his treatment of the profession of medicine as a profession we find it equally sound; but here, instead of being an unconscious and imaginative philosopher, he is a gay and libellous reporter. He writes, with his characteristic qualities of whimsicality and exaggeration, of the general practitioner as he had met him. He is not in the least flattering to medicine and barely touches on the higher ideals of those who practise it.

No doctor plays more than a very subsidiary part in the big romances, and no stress is laid upon the display by any one of them of fine intellectual or moral qualities. Allan Woodcourt, the young surgeon who marries Esther Summerson, is the single exception that occurs to me of this general rule, and the presentment is quite unconvincing and uninteresting. But if there are no stagey medical heroes, so there are no stagey medical villains. Dickens gives us the doctors whom he knew, the general practitioners whom he had observed about their business. He drew them in a spirit of amiable if extensive caricature, and the few lines devoted to them give a very fair picture of several types of early and mid-Victorian family doctors. Dr. Parker Peps in 'Dombey and Son,' and the unnamed surgeon in 'Little Dorrit' are the two principal portraits of the consultant class drawn by Dickens. The first is a comical libel upon any individual physician, and yet the character has many happy points. We may be permitted to wonder how the Parker Peps of the first chapter, where he is a celebrated obstetrician, has developed into the general consultant by the time he stands at little Paul's death-bed. The transformation is an error in detail. Allowing for the fact that elaborate specialism is largely a thing of to-day, still there is a mistake here; for the practice of midwifery, more than at the present time, was half a century ago a thing apart. The unnamed distinguished practitioner whom Mr. Merdle, the

eminent financier and thief, consulted with regard to his health, is a medical Tulkinghorn—he keeps close watch on his patients, preserves their secrets, commands their confidence, and enjoys the power that he thus secures. This is hinted at, not laboured over as it is in Mr. Tulkinghorn's case, but the impressions produced are identical. We can see, in Mr. Merdle's adviser, the man of the world, knowing so much of the seamy side that he is necessarily disillusioned, kind, tolerant, and witty. At least I think I can see all that, though vision is helped by only a few sentences.

Dr. Bayham Badger, Mr. Chillingworth, Mr. Losberne, and Mr. Jobling are far more closely observed. They may be taken as typical examples of Dickens's attitude towards the general practitioner. It is the attitude of Mr. Merdle's medical adviser—critical and tolerant. Dr. Bayham Badger, 'Mrs. Bayham Badger's third,' is a more or less fashionable doctor, and the sketch of the socially ambitious middle-class man is very acute. This pink-and-white crisp-looking gentleman, with a meek voice and surprised eyes, was probably quite a successful general practitioner, but he never could have had any sense of the meaning of his profession and never could have desired to get more out of it than a secure and, if possible, rising social position. An ass and a snob, he may very well have known the routine of his work, and would in all circumstances have behaved with decorum. He was a safe man.

Mr. Jobling was essentially an unsafe man. This accomplice of knaves, the tout of Montague Tigg, himself touted for by undertaker and nurse, belonged to an evil school. The amount of harm that a corrupt practitioner can do, much of it quite unconsciously, is indicated in Jobling's character. 'We know a few secrets of nature in our profession, Sir,' said Mr. Jobling. 'Of course we do. We study for that; we pass the Hall and the College for that; and we take our station in society on that.' (Note that Dickens knew the regular double qualifications under which the English doctor usually practised at the time—most novelists would have given Jobling some impossible degree.) But Jobling took his own station in society upon nothing so orthodox and creditable as his diplomas. Whether he was a skilled practitioner or not, his success was clearly due to the fact that he was not nice in his morals, and his unscrupulousness was a direct link in the chain between Jonas Chuzzlewit and murder.

Mr. Chillingworth, the meek and mild medical man who officiated at the birth of David Copperfield, is an excellent character as far as he goes; we may well consider him next, to obliterate the disagreeable impression left upon us by Mr. Montague Tigg's

'Jobling, my dear fellow.' Mr. Chillip's professional life is duly observed. He moves in the social scale that the village doctor would do, and his kindness and amiability get success for him, as they ought. His goodness and simplicity are transparent, and in the sphere of life where his path lay we may be sure that he was an ever-pleasant as well as ever-present help in time of trouble. The same may be said of fat Mr. Losberne, who 'splintered up'—Dickens meant 'put up in splints'—Oliver Twist's arm, and who so gaily dislodged Mr. Giles, butler and doer of the deed, from the position of hero which he had assumed.

The family medical adviser is referred to casually in nearly every novel, but the four selected for mention are the most carefully drawn portraits. Their sum total cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory. For all are ridiculous, and one is highly so. None is ever placed in any position where the possession of high principles would be tested, and one would certainly have broken down under the slightest test. But three are good fellows, and it is not suggested that, within their limitations, they do not all do their work efficiently.

The way, however, to see how far Dickens was intending to be harsh to the medical profession as a whole is to look for a moment at his treatment of the other professions. The law, of which he had some practical knowledge both as clerk and police reporter, is lampooned throughout. The lawyers are far more important to the stories than the doctors are, and their record of villainy is prodigious. Sampson Brass and Uriah Heep are first-class villains; Vholes, Dodson, Fogg, Stryver, and Pell are very unpleasant people; Jaggers of Little Britain, so burly and bullying, immersed in court business of a criminal kind, has this in common with Tulkinghorn of Lincoln's Inn, so close and irresponsible, the silent depository of family confidences—neither does anything from a high motive, though I have a habit of liking them both. Eugene Wrayburn, whimsical and fascinating, is an unconscious bounder; Hiram Grewgious and Perker are the best of a poor lot morally; the second is honest and competent, while the first is a good man.

The Church is condemned otherwise—it is hardly ever mentioned in the books at all as a social or useful force. Think of what this means. These lengthy and complicated romances, containing over two thousand characters, and for the most part dealing with contemporary life—though the phases of that life and the individuals who live it may be rendered by a teeming imagination in terms of cubisms, rather than of photography—contain, as far as I can

remember, only one clergyman worth recording for his virtues. Quite a large proportion of the names in any dictionary of Dickens's characters would fall under the headings of unfortunate, poor, sick, crazy, or bad. Yet in how few instances do the ministrations of religion, as proffered by the ordained representatives, play any part in the drama. The chapter at Cloisterham and its breezy boring minor canon, Mr. Crisparkle, play no part in the tremendous dramas about them, and the bishop who dined with Mr. Merdle to meet the Barnacles is a jokelet. Oliver Twist went through his terrible association with crime of the meanest as well as of the gravest sort on the spot where Mackonochie and Stanton became part and parcel of daily life, and where the seeds that they have sown bear copious harvest on unpromising soil. No hint is given by Dickens of any sympathy by the clergy with those who have strayed from the fold. True, the Church at the accession of Queen Victoria was not active in the spheres in which Sikes, Nancy, Fagin, and John Dawkins moved; but it is surprising that neither did Dickens's imagination prompt him to describe the servant of God working in such a blasted vineyard, nor did his magnificent sense of justice move him, so far as I remember, to urge an apathetic institution to carry on some work of reclamation. I recall no passages of the sort in his works. The Reverend Frank Milvey, 'officially accessible to every blundering old woman who had incoherence to bestow upon him . . . expensively educated and wretchedly paid,' who toiled all day and night 'out Holloway direction,' stands up as a very St. Francis in an imaginary world where no others compete with him for canonisation. Compared with Dickens's treatment of the legal profession, which he man-handled bitterly, riotously, and with gorgeous humour, and with his treatment of the clerical profession, which for practical purposes he ignored, I find his qualified regard for medicine complimentary.

If none of Dickens's medical men stay much in our memories, the exact contrary may be said of his students and his nurses. Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig, Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen, are as well known as Mr. Micawber, Mr. Pecksniff, Sydney Carton, and Mr. Pickwick himself. They come, I think, within the scope of a consideration of medicine in Dickens, but I only propose to say a few words about them. With regard to the nurses, Dickens drew what he had seen, and helped a public, rocking with mirth, to appreciate the existence in its midst of a filthy and dangerous

scandal. With regard to the students, Dickens also drew what he had seen, and the injustice to medical students lay in his attributing to students of medicine all the loose habits of students in general, and then typifying students in general by two particularly special examples. It is the old but none the less sound defence of those who would explain the almost boundless exaggeration of some of Dickens's characters to say that he drew types, not individuals. No one was ever so gorgeously benevolent as the Cheeryble Brothers, so fatuous as Mr. Dombey and Mr. Podsnap, or so irrelevant as Flora Finch and Mrs. Nickleby ; they are the exposition of their failings. Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen, who were suggested by Pierce Egan's heroes, are the personification of deboshed apprentices ; they are not portraits of students, and certainly not of medical students. The observations from life made by Dickens in his youth—he was only twenty-four when he wrote *Pickwick*—were made in a humble stratum of society, where one young man in training for his calling was much like another. Dickens mixed up all the idle tyros of any trade or calling across whom he came, and a good many of these were not embarking upon any professional career, and presented the quintessence of their humour and raffishness in two young men with the label of medical student attached to them. By the time he was writing '*Bleak House*'—that is to say, some fifteen or sixteen years after the publication of '*Pickwick*'—he knew more ; and Richard Carstone (who entered the medical profession in what was then quite the orthodox manner, under the tutelage of Mr. Bayham Badger), though a tragically inefficient person, was no rowdy.

On the whole, I think Dickens treated medicine well. He placed neither the science nor the practitioner on any pedestal. But that he respected medicine is indicated in several ways. He refrained from introducing into his books pathological travesties, the result of the ill-digestion of text-books. A great sensational novelist, he did not once make a doctor play any leading part as a villain. Lastly, he helped in a very pronounced degree to rescue society from the ministrations of the hopeless class into whose hands the calling of nursing was committed. At the time of his earlier writings, our grandparents suffered much from the nurse-hag. I think of their sorrows with fortitude when I reflect that it is from their sorrows that we derive Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig. Society owes Dickens a double debt for having buried the nurse-hag under inextinguishable laughter.

THORLEY WEIR.¹

BY E. F. BENSON.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE morning towards the end of March Frank Armstrong was sitting in Charles' studio with a writing-pad on the table in front of him, a smoked-out pipe upside down between his lips, a corrugated forehead, rumpled hair, and an expression of the wickedest ill-humour on his face. Beside him on the floor a waste-paper basket vomited half-sheets of futile manuscript; other pages, crumpled up and rejected, strewed the floor. At the far end of the studio Charles was encamped on the model's stand, painting, as he had done in the portrait of his mother, from a position above the sitter. It gave an opportunity of subtle foreshadowing which was a holy joy if you could do it right, which he was quite convinced he could. An expression of vivid and absorbed content—absorbed he was by the sight of Frank wrestling with his work, and cursing and swearing at his difficulties—pervaded his face. To him, from the artistic point of view that angry scowling countenance was a beatific vision. Frank had come earlier than he had expected that morning, bringing his work with him as desired, and Charles, half-dressed only in loose shirt and flannel trousers, had hopped on to his seat immediately, for Frank with scarcely a word of greeting had sat down at once to struggle with a troublesome situation. Seated there, with his sheaf of spear-like paint-brushes, and his young and seraphic face, Charles looked like some modern variation of St. Sebastian. Frank had already remarked this with singular annoyance.

Charles smiled and stared and painted.

‘If you could manage to put that pipe out of your mouth for five minutes, Frank,’ he said tentatively.

‘But I couldn’t.’

‘It doesn’t matter a bit,’ said Charles cordially.

Frank instantly took it out, and Charles had to stop painting for a moment, for he was so entertained by the brilliance of his

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own guilefulness that his hand trembled. But in a moment he got to work again, and began whistling under his breath.

‘Oh, do stop that row,’ said Frank.

The picture had been begun a month ago, and was nearing completion. At present Charles was pleased with it, which was saying a good deal. His mother, on the other hand, thought Mr. Armstrong was not quite such a bear as that. And Mr. Armstrong had said ‘You don’t know much about bears.’ Charles’ first request to paint him had met with a firm refusal. But very shortly after Frank had said :

‘You can do a picture of me if you like, Charles. But on one condition only, that you let me buy it of you in the ordinary way.’

This time the refusal came from the artist. But a second attempt on Frank’s part met with better success.

‘You don’t understand about the picture,’ he said ; ‘I really want it for mercantile reasons. I’ll pay you whatever Mrs. Fortescue paid, and I shall think I’ve made an excellent bargain, just as she does. People are talking about you. You’ll get double these prices next year. Then I shall sell my picture and buy some more beer and perhaps give you a tip. I’m as hard as nails about money : don’t you think I’m doing you a favour. And as a word of general advice, do get rid of a little of your sickly humility. You’re like Uriah Heep. Isn’t he, Mrs.—Mrs. Heep ?’

Mrs. Lathom looked up at him very gravely.

‘There is something in what you say, Master Copperfield,’ she observed.

This morning, after Charles’ whistling had been thus peremptorily stopped, the work went on in silence for some quarter of an hour. Then Frank gave a great shout.

‘I’ve got it,’ he said, and began scribbling and reading as he scribbled. “It isn’t that you don’t believe me, it’s that you are able not to believe me.” Yes ; that’s it, and the British public won’t understand the least what it means, so we’ll put “Long pause.” And then they will give a great sigh as if they did. Now it’s plain sailing.’

His face cleared, as the pen began to move more rapidly, and when Charles looked up at him again, the St. Sebastian air left him altogether.

‘You are perfectly useless if you smile in that inane manner,’ he said.

'Perfectly useless; perfectly useless,' said Frank absently. But soon his inane smile left him; he was in difficulties again, and Charles greatly prospered.

Frank got up and yawned.

'I'm worked out,' he said. 'Charles, it's a dog's life. And all the time, I'm not doing it for myself; there's the rub. I've been grinding here all morning, and have done a couple of pages: if I sit and grind every day like this for a couple of months, perhaps I may get it done. And then I shall go with my hat in my hand, on bended knee, to that old fat cross-legged Buddha who sits there sniffing up the incense of our toil, and say "Please, Mr. Craddock, will this do? Will you deign to accept this humble token from your worshipper?"'

'I can hear you say it,' said Charles, half shutting his eyes to look at his work, and not attending to Frank.

Frank jumped up on to the model-stand, putting his hand on Charles' shoulder to steady himself.

'No, you can't,' said Frank, 'because I never shall say it. Charles, I'm sure that's libellously like me. Shall I bring an action against you for it, or shall I merely topple you and the stool over on to the floor?'

'Whichever you please. It is pretty like you, you know.'

Charles looked up at him.

'But not when you look like that. Why this unwonted good temper?'

'It will soon pass. I think it's because I've done a good bit of work. Oh, Lord, it will soon pass. All for Craddock, you know. I wish to heaven I could infect you with some of my detestation of him.'

Charles frowned.

'Oh, do give up trying,' he said. 'It's no use arguing about it. Of course he's making the devil of a lot of money out of you, and it's very annoying, if you look at that fact alone. But where would you have been if he hadn't put on "Easter Eggs" for you? Sleeping beneath the churchyard sod as like as not. And I daresay he's going to make something out of me. Well, where would I have been if he hadn't bought that picture of Reggie, and hadn't come to look at my things? In the Sidney Street garret still. Instead of which——' and Charles waved a paint-brush airily round his studio.

Frank re-lit his pipe, and began gathering up the débris of his rejected manuscript.

' You oughtn't to be allowed about alone,' he said. ' You say "Kind man!" too much. You're like a fat baby that says "Dada" to everybody in the railway carriage. I tell you people aren't kind men. They want to "do" you. They want to get the most they can out of you.'

' And you out of them,' said Charles.

' Within limits. Kind Craddock hasn't got any limits. Besides, I don't humbug people.'

' Nor does—'

' Well, he tries to. He tried to humbug me, telling me he took such an interest in me and my work. He didn't; he took an interest in the money he thought he could make out of it. Oh, it isn't only Craddock; it's everybody; it's the way the world's made. I'm not sure women aren't the worst of all. Look at the way they all took me up when "Easter Eggs" came out. I didn't see why at first. But it's plain enough now. They thought I should make some more successes—just like Craddock,—and then I should take them to the theatre and give them dinner—'

' Oh, bosh,' said Charles, very loud.

' It's not bosh. The idea that fellows like you have of women is enough to make one ill. You think they are tender, and self-sacrificing, and helpless, and trustful, and loving. Helpless! Good Lord! An ordinary modern girl is as well able to take care of herself among men as a Dreadnought among fishing-smacks. She sidles along just turning her screw, and then "Bang, Bang!" she blows them all out of the water if she doesn't want them, and sucks them in if she does, and lets down a great grappling-iron from her deck and hauls them on board. And when they are married they are supposed to be clinging and devoted and absorbed in their husbands and babies. Was there ever such a misconception? Why, supposing you find a block of women on the pavement opposite a shop, you may bet ten thousand to one that that shop is a dress-maker's, or a seller of women's clothes. They stand glued to the glass like flies on fly-paper, thinking how sweet they would look in that eight-guinea walking-dress. And when they have to move away they walk with their heads still looking at the windows, stupefied and fascinated, still gazing at some dreadful white corset trimmed with lace, or open-work stockings. And they aren't thinking how ravished their silly Dick or Harry will be to see them in that new skirt, with the foolish open-work stockings peeping out below it; they are thinking how ravishing they will look when other women see them in it, and how greenly jealous other women

will be. If they were thinking of their husbands, they would glue their faces to the windows of a tailor, imagining how ravishing darling Dick or Harry would look in that cheviot tweed. But not they !'

' Oh, put it all into one of your rotten plays,' said Charles.

' Not I, thank you. The Dreadnoughts would blow me out of the water. But I 'm saying it to you for your good. You trust people too much, men and women alike. You go smiling and wagging your tail like a puppy, thinking that everybody is going to be kind and tender and unselfish. Especially foolish is your view of women. You 've got a sense of chivalry, and a man with a sense of chivalry always gets left. You 're just as absurd about men too ; you think people are nice to you because they like you ; it is very conceited of you—'

' Oh, I was Uriah Heep not long ago,' remarked Charles.

' So you are still. But the truth is that people seem to like one in order to be able to get something out of one. Who of all men in the world now is going about saying perfectly fulsome things about me ? Why, that slimy Akroyd, because he is making his fortune out of me. But he tried to "do" me all right over the play. Craddock too : I 'm told he is always saying nice things about me. That 's because he wants me to put my very best work into the plays I have got to write for him.'

Charles remembered that Craddock had said not altogether nice things about Frank on one occasion. He often remembered that, but, as often, he remembered also that they were expressly meant for his private ear. The fact lurked always in his mind, in the shadow into which he had deliberately pushed it.

' And here we are back at Craddock,' he said.

' Yes. Oh, by the way, Charles, I saw a flame of yours last night, a very old flame in fact, Lady Crowborough. I daresay you would have thought she was being tender and solicitous about you. I thought that she was merely extremely inquisitive.'

' About me ? ' said Charles.

' Yes. She wanted to know all I could tell her about you. She reminded me of somebody wanting to engage a servant from a previous employer.'

Charles looked thoroughly puzzled.

' Lady Crowborough ? ' he asked again. ' About me ? '

' Yes ; I 've already said so. What 's the matter ? '

Charles had risen and came across to where Frank sat in the

window-seat. Into his head there had instantaneously flashed the episode of his proposing himself to go down to the Mill House to look at his Reynolds' copy, and the inexplicable letter of Mr. Wroughton's.

'Nothing's the matter,' he said, sitting down close to Frank. 'But please tell me just all you can. Did you ask her why she wanted to know ?'

'Not I. It was perfectly clear that somebody had been gently hinting things about you. But I told her a good deal.'

Frank's face grew quite gentle and affectionate.

'I told her you were the best chap in the world,' he said. 'That's about what it came to. I think I made her believe it too.'

Then hurrying away from anything approaching to sentiment :

'Of course we have to lie on behalf of a friend,' he said briskly. 'I daresay she wanted to be sure she could trust herself in your studio without a chaperon.'

Charles did not smile at this.

'But you think some one has been telling damned lies about me ?' he asked.

'Probably. Why not ? And what does it matter ? Don't be upset, Charles. I wish I hadn't told you. At least I don't think I do. It may convince you that there's somebody in the world not set to a hymn-tune. Now do dress, and you will then come and lunch with me in my flat, and you may be able to hear Craddock walking about overhead. That'll make you happy, and you can get a step-ladder and kiss the ceiling !'

But there was another idea now that had to be put in the shadow of Charles' mind. It was far uglier than the first, and had to be poked away in the darkest of recesses.

As soon as money had begun at all to flow his way last autumn, Charles had hounded his mother (as she put it) out of her disgusting rooms (so he put it) in Sidney Street, and had established her modestly indeed, but comfortably, in Grieve's Crescent, not far from his new studio. To-night he was going to dine at home, and he looked forward to the serenity that always seemed as much a part of her as her hands or her hair, as a man after a hot and dusty day may look forward to a cool bath. Pictures that were candidates for the Academy had to be sent in before the end of this week, and he had spent an industrious afternoon working steadily at the background and accessories in his portrait of Frank. Craddock had advised him to send this, and the portraits of his mother and Mrs.

Fortescue, to the august tribunal, and had promised to speak helpful words, if such were necessary, in authoritative ears. But to-day the joy of painting had wholly deserted Charles, and as he worked (his conscious mind occupied with problems of light and shadow), his unconscious mind had done a great deal of meditation, and the disagreeable objects he had so loyally stuffed away in the dark seemed gambolling there like cats, active and alert. Every now and then one or other seemed to leap out of the shadow and confront him ; and with Frank's face always before him on the canvas, they seemed in some nightmare sort of fashion to be using this mask of paint to communicate with him. It was as if Frank knew all that Charles had been so careful not to tell him . . . it was as if he said ' Oh, he warned you against me, did he ? That was so like him.' Worse still, Frank seemed to say, ' And he 's warned other people against you. That 's why you weren't welcome at the Mill House. He wanted to cut you off from the Wroughtons.' I wonder why : what motive can he have had. . . . Look for a bad one. Let me see, wasn't there a girl ? Why, yes, I bet she is the girl among the forget-me-nots. What a liar you are, Charles ! You always said it was a picture out of your head. Are you a rival, do you think ? '

All afternoon this sort of vague unspoken monologue rang in his ears. Again and again he pulled himself up, knowing that these were conversations internal to himself, not to be indulged in, but the moment his conscious and superficial mind was occupied again with his craft they began again.

There were other voices mixed with them . . . he almost heard Lady Crowborough say ' Five thousand pounds for a lick of paint.' He almost heard Reggie say ' Drew a cheque for ten thousand and one hundred pounds. . . .' And again he pulled himself up : he felt that he would be suspecting his mother next for overcharging him for board and lodging. It was all Frank's fault, with his cynical false views about the rottenness of mankind.

For once Charles felt glad that the light was beginning to fail, and that he could honestly abandon work. But before he left his studio, he turned Joyce's picture round to the light, and stood looking at it for a moment.

' I can't and won't believe it,' he said.

There was still an hour to spare before he need go home to dinner, and he hustled out for a walk in the Park in the fading day. Spring was languorous in the air, but triumphantly victorious in the spaces of grass, where she marched with daffodils and crocuses for

the banner of her advancing vanguard. The squibs of green leaves had burst from their red sheaths on the limes, and planes were putting forth tentative and angled hands, as if groping and feeling their way, still drowsy from the winter's slumber, into the air, under the provocation of the compelling month. All this did Charles good : he liked the sense of the silent plants, all expanding according to their own law, minding their own business, which was just to grow and blossom, and not warning each other of the untrustworthiness of their neighbours. Frank ought to be planted out here, with a gag in his clever mouth, and an archangel or two to inject into his acidulated veins the milk of human kindness. . . . Charles smiled at the idea : he would make a cartoon of it on a postcard and send it to him.

And then suddenly his heart hammered and stood still, and out of his brain were driven all the thoughts and suspicions that he had been stifling all day. Frank and his cynicism, Craddock and his sincere kindnesses, his art, his mother, his dreams and deeds were all blown from him as the awakening of an untamed wind by night blows from a sultry sky the sullen and low-hung clouds, leaving the ray of stars celestial to make the darkness bright and holy again, . . . and down the broad path towards him came Joyce. Until she had got quite close to him she did not see him, but then she stopped suddenly, and suddenly and sweetly he saw the unmanageable colour rise in her face and knew that in his own the secret signal answered hers.

'Oh, Mr. Lathom,' she said, 'is it you ? Grandmamma telegraphed for me to come up this morning : I am here for a night.'

'Not ill, I hope ?' said Charles.

Joyce laughed.

'No, I am glad to say. She was not in when I got to her house, and I had to come out. . . . Spring, you know.'

Their eyes met in a quick glance, and Charles drew a long breath.

'I discovered it ten minutes ago,' he said. 'Spring, just spring : month of April.'

For another long moment they stood there, face to face, spring round them and below them, and above them, and in them. Then Joyce pointed to the grass.

'Oh, the fattest wood-pigeon !' she said. 'I don't know why Grannie sent for me. I must be getting back. I am late already : is there a taxi, do you think ?'

Charles' ill-luck prevailed : there was, and he put her into it, and stood there looking after its retreat. As it turned the corner not

fifty yards away out of the Park, most distinctly did he see Joyce lean forward and look out. . . . And though not one atom of his ill-defined troubles or suspicions was relieved, he walked on air all the way home instead of wading through some foul resistent stickiness of mud. . . . The great star, the only star that really mattered, had shone on him again, not averting its light.

But though he walked on air, the mud was still there.

'A visitor to tea, Charles,' said Mrs. Lathom, as they sat down. 'I wish you had been home earlier. Three guesses.'

'Mother lies,' remarked Reggie, 'You don't wish Charles had been here: you enjoyed being asked those things. That would never have happened if Charles had been at home.'

This was rather like the uncomfortable though not uncommon phenomenon of feeling that the scene now being enacted had taken place before. Charles experienced this vividly at the moment.

'My first guess and last is Lady Crowborough,' he said. 'Right, I fancy.'

'Near enough,' said Reggie. 'And her questions?'

Charles felt himself descend into the mud again. It closed stiffly about him, and he thrust something back into the darkness of his mind.

'Perfectly simple,' he said. 'She wanted to know exactly all about me, as if—as if she was going to engage me as a servant, and was making inquiries into my character.'

'Very clever. How was it done?' as'ed Reggie.

'Never mind. It is done, isn't it, mother?'

'Yes, dear; but how did you know?'

'It had to be so; that is all. Oh, I've had a tiresome day, all but half a minute of it. And my portraits have to go in before the end of the week, and they will all be rejected.'

'Dear, there's not much conviction in your voice,' observed Mrs. Lathom. 'And aren't you being Uriah-ish, as Mr. Armstrong says?'

'Probably. But Frank was sitting to me this morning, and his tirades put me out of joint. They made my mind ache like rheumatism. The worst of it is . . .'

He had stuck fast again in the slough, and again suspicions with dreadful faces and evil communications on tongue-tip looked at him from the darkness. The sight of Reggie also had given birth to others: there they stood in a dim and lengthening line, waiting for his nod to come out into the open.

' You may as well let us know the worst,' said Reggie encouragingly. " I can't bear the suspense," as Akroyd says in Frank's play, " It—it kulls me." That's over the fourth turning. Much the funniest. What did Frank tirade about, Charles? I wish I had been there. I love hearing his warnings on the wickedness of the whole human race. It makes me wonder, when I can't account for a sixpence, whether you haven't taken it out of my trousers' pockets while I was asleep.'

' I suppose that's the sort of thing you really enjoy thinking about,' said Charles savagely.

' Yes; it's so interesting. Sometimes I think you are rather bad for Frank. He said to me the other day, " You can always trust Charles." I asked him if he didn't feel well. It wasn't like him.'

Mrs. Lathom got up. It was perfectly evident that something worried Charles, and it was possible he might like to talk alone either with Reggie or her. If she took herself upstairs, Charles could join her, and leave his brother, or wait with him here, if he was to be the chosen depository.

' Don't be too long, boys,' she said, going out.

Charles did not at once shew any sign of the desire to consult, and Reggie, who had left Thistleton's Gallery in the winter, and obtained a clerkship in a broker's office in the city, politely recounted a witticism or two from the Stock Exchange, with a view to reconciling his brother to the human race. They fell completely flat, and Charles sat frowning and silent, blowing ragged rings of smoke.

At length he got up.

' Reggie, I've been worried all day,' he said, ' and seeing you has put another worry into my mind.'

Reggie linked his arm in his brother's.

' I'm so sorry, Charles,' he said, ' and I've been babbling goatishly on. Why didn't you stop me? Nothing I've done to worry you, I hope?'

Reggie went anxiously over in his mind a variety of small adventurous affairs . . . but there was nothing that should cause the eclipse of his brother's spirits.

' No, it doesn't concern you in any way, except as regards your memory. If you aren't perfectly certain about a couple of points I want to ask you, say so.'

' Well?'

' The first is this. Do you remember last June an American

called Ward drawing a cheque at your desk at Thistleton's ? I want you to tell me all that you remember about it.'

Reggie leaned his arm on the chimneypiece.

'Ward and Craddock came out together,' he said after a pause. 'Ward asked for my pen and drew a cheque for five thousand pounds, post-dating it by a day or two. I'm not sure how long—'

'It doesn't matter,' said Charles. 'The cheque—'

'The cheque was for a couple of Dutch pictures he had bought. There was a Van der Weyde, I think—'

'Dutch pictures ? You never told me that. Are you sure ?'

'Quite. Is that all ? And what's wrong ?'

Charles was silent a moment. One of the figures in the shadow leapt out of it, and seemed to nod recognition at him.

'No, there's one thing more. Didn't the same sort of affair happen again ?' he asked.

'Oh yes, much later ; I should say in October. Ward did exactly the same thing—drew another cheque out at my desk, I mean, for rather an odd sum. What was it ? Ten thousand—ten thousand and something—ten thousand one hundred, I think. He drew it to Craddock as before. Yes. I'm sure it was for that. But how does it all concern you ? Or why does it worry you ? May I know, Charles ?'

Charles wondered whether his horrible inference was somehow quite unsound—whether to another his interpretation would seem ingenious indeed, but laughably fantastic. He felt he knew what Frank would make of it, but to Reggie the whole affair might seem of purely imaginary texture.

'Yes, I'll tell you,' he said. 'And I can't say how I long to find that you think I am suspicious and devilishly-minded. The facts are these. Craddock paid Mr. Wroughton five thousand pounds for his Reynolds, giving him a cheque of Ward's, who purchased it. But you tell me this cheque was for Dutch pictures. The Reynolds picture did not go to him till much later : I don't know when. And Craddock gave me fifty pounds for copying it. Do you see ? What if—if Ward gave Craddock a cheque for ten thousand pounds for the picture with a hundred for me for the copy ? Now—am I worse than Frank, more suspicious, more—more awful ?'

Reggie was staring at him with wide-open eyes and shook his head.

'No,' he said. 'It sounds, it sounds—But surely it's impossible.'

'Oh, I'm tired of saying that to myself. By the way, don't say a word to anyone. There are other things, too. Oh, Reggie, can't you think of any explanation that is at all reasonable ?'

Again Reggie shook his head.

'No,' he said, 'the first cheque was for some Dutch pictures.'

'Well, let's go upstairs,' said the other.

Later in the evening, when Mrs. Lathom went to bed, Charles followed her up to her room, and sat down in front of her fire while she brushed her hair. It was not rarely that he did this, and these minutes were to him a sort of confessional. Generally, the confession was a mere babble of happy talk, concerning his pictures, and his projects, but to-night he sat silent until the hair-brushing was nearly over. Then he spoke.

'Mother, darling,' he said, 'I saw Miss Joyce this evening, and—and she was jolly and friendly and natural. It lifted me up out of—what is it ?—out of the mire and clay. But I've gone back again—oh, much deeper. I want your advice.'

She instantly got up, and came across to him. He put her in his chair, and sat down on the rug by her, leaning against her knees.

'Ah, I'm so glad, my darling,' she said, 'that you want to tell me what's wrong. Those are my jewels.'

'I can't tell you explicitly what is wrong. But I suspect some one whom I have always trusted immensely, who has been very good to me, of—of swindling, and perhaps worse. What am I to do ?'

She stroked his hair.

'Oh, my dear, if it is only suspicion, dismiss it all from your mind or make a certainty of it one way or the other.'

'But how ?'

'I can't be sure without knowing the facts. But if your suspicion is reasonable—if, I mean, you can see no other explanation except the bad one—go as soon as you can to anyone who can give you certain information. But if there's a loophole for doubt—'

'I don't see that there is,' said Charles quickly.

'Then make certain somehow and quickly,' she said. 'Not in a hurry, of course, for you must not act foolishly—but as soon as you can with wisdom. Oh, Charles, we can none of us risk keeping suspicion in our minds ! There is nothing so poisoning. It—it shuts the windows of our souls ; it turns everything sour ; it spreads like some dreadful contagion, and infects all within us,

so that there is no health left, or sense of beauty, or serenity. It is like walking in a cloud of flies. But my dear, unless your suspicion is—is terribly well-founded, don't give it another thought, if you can possibly avoid it. Be very certain that you can't explain things away otherwise.'

Charles turned a shining face to her—shining for her through all his trouble.

'Thanks, mother, darling,' he said. 'It really is a beastly position. And I'm such a coward.'

'So are we all, dear,' she said. 'But most of us don't turn back really. Perhaps we aren't such cowards as we think. It is so easy to make the worst of oneself.'

Charles got up.

'Yes, but I'm pretty bad,' he said.

'I know, dear. You are a continual sorrow and trouble to me. Ah, bless you! And you saw Joyce. That's something, isn't it?'

'Well, a good deal,' said he. 'Good night. I must get back home.'

Charles had labelled himself coward; and indeed, as in the manner of youth, whose function so clearly in this life is to enjoy, he shrank from pain instinctively, not seeing beyond the present discomfort, but living in the moment. Yet it was not his bravery that was here attacked; it was at his trust that the blow at which he cowered was aimed—at the confidence in his fellows which was so natural to him. As he lay tossing and turning that night, he could not imagine himself taking the only step that seemed to be able to decide his suspicions, which was to go to Craddock himself with the whole history of them. There was just one other chance—namely, that Lady Crowborough's purpose in making these inexplicable inquiries about him might declare itself. That in a manner ruthlessly convincing would settle everything, if her purpose was that which he could not but surmise. And at the thought, he felt his face burn with a flame of anger, at the possibility of so monstrous an explanation. Yet all this agitating thought was just the secret nurture and suckling of suspicion against which his mother had warned him. How right she was: how the poison encroached and spread!

Frank turned up early next morning for his final sitting, with an evil eye and a brisk demeanour.

'A plan at last,' he announced, 'a real plan, and a good plot for a play. It's all quite serious, and I'm going to do it. It has taken me five months to puzzle it out, and last night it all burst upon me. New play of mine, which I shall begin working at immediately; I'm stale over the other, and this will be a change. I daresay Craddock will like it so much that he will ask me to put the other aside a bit. You see it's about Craddock. He's an egotist, you see; he will like that.'

Charles was touched on the raw.

'Oh, do leave him alone, Frank,' he said; with a sudden appeal, as it were, to his own vanished confidence. 'We disagree about him, you know, as we settled yesterday. It isn't really very nice of you to abuse a man who's a friend of mine.'

'Nor is it nice of you to stick up for an enemy of mine,' remarked Frank. 'You should respect my dislike just as much as I should respect your affection. As you never do, I shall proceed.'

Charles perched himself on his painting-stool. He could at least try to absorb himself in his work, for the sake of stifling his own thoughts even more than of distracting them from what Frank said.

'Rumple your hair,' he said, 'and stop still.'

'I'm going to submit the scenario to Craddock this evening if I can see him,' he said, obligingly rubbing up his hair. 'Golly, it's a good plot. I've really only thought out the first two acts, but that will be enough for him to judge by. It's called "The Middleman." There's a lot in a title.'

Charles sighed.

'You needn't go on,' he said. 'I can tell it you. He's a great big fat chap, popular and wealthy and hearty, engaged to a delightful girl. Then it comes out that he sweats young men of genius—you and me, of course—takes them up when they are unknown, and gets options on their future works. Isn't that it?'

'Where's the plot, then? You don't see the hang of it. One of those young men of genius—that's me—goes to him in the play with a play of which what you have just said is the sketch—Hamlet's not in it any more—and says, "Now let me out of these options of yours, or I shall write a play like that." And then it will faintly dawn on Craddock that the play is really happening to him, and that in real life—I shall do exactly what the young man of genius says he will do. Do you see? Simultaneously another of the young men of genius—that's you—you can be in love with

the Middleman's girl—says, “ I'm going to paint a portrait called ‘ The Middleman,’ a great big fat chap, with gold dust on his coat collar. There's a play called ‘ The Middleman ’ coming out at the same time : you may have heard of it. Now will you let me out of your options ? ” The Middleman in a burst of righteous indignation exclaims “ This is a conspiracy.” And they both say “ It is a conspiracy. What then ? ” He's in rather a hole isn't he ? ”

Charles did not answer.

‘ You're an ungrateful dog, Charles,’ said Frank, ‘ it gets you out of your options too. That shall be part of my bargain. I really am going to Craddock with that scenario. There's no third act, it is true, but he will give me credit for thinking of something spicy. Tranby would take that sort of play like a shot. Craddock has “ done ” me. Why shouldn't I “ do ” him ? Do those whom you've been done by. A very Christian sentiment, and an application of abstract justice.’

Charles put down his palette and got off his stool. There was a Frank-ish, a fiendish ingenuity about this, which, in ordinary mental weather, so to speak, with a gleam of sun on his own part to give sparkle to the east wind of it, could not have failed to make brisk talking. But to-day, with his nightmare of doubts swarming bat-like round him, he found no humour, but only horror in it.

‘ Sometimes I hardly think you're human, Frank,’ he said. ‘ If you really believe Craddock is a swindler, how can you make jokes about it ? If it was true, it would be too terrible to speak of. But you believe it is true, and yet you dwell on it, and gloat on it. I think you're a sort of devil, rubbing your hands when you see poor souls damning themselves.’

‘ Hullo ! ’ said Frank, rather startled by this.

‘ It's no good saying “ Hullo.” It isn't news to you,’ said Charles, standing in front of the fire, flushed and troubled and looking younger than ever. ‘ I've often told you I hate your attitude towards Craddock. It hurts me to hear a jolly good friend of mine abused, and you're continually doing it.’

It would have required a prodigiously dull fellow not to see that there was something serious at the bottom of this. For all Frank's cynicism, for all the armoured hardness with which he met the world, there was just one person for whom he felt an affection, a protective tenderness that he was half-ashamed of, and yet cherished and valued more than any of the other tinned goods, so

to speak, in his spiritual larder. It had fragrance, the freshness of dew on it. . . . He got up, and put his hands on Charles' shoulders.

'Charles, old chap,' he said, 'you never told me in that voice, you know.'

Charles shook his head.

'I know I didn't,' he said. 'I never felt it in—in that voice before. But I do now. I can't bear the thought of anybody I know cheating and swindling and lying. Suppose I found out that you had been cheating me, or blackguarding me, should I be able to laugh about it, do you think, or sketch out a damned little play to read to you, which would show you up ?'

'Yes, but you always say that Craddock's been so good to you,' said Frank. 'Till now, you have always half laughed at me when I slanged him. And who has been blackguarding you, I should like to know ? What does that mean ? Or—or are you referring to what Lady Crowborough asked me ? I talked some rot about the explanation being that some one had been abusing you.'

Charles grasped at this, rather appealingly.

'Yes, it was rot, wasn't it, Frank ?' he said.

'Of course it was. Charles, I never dreamed it would stick in your mind like this. But what has that got to do with Craddock and his nimble option ?'

Charles interrupted clamorously.

'Nothing, nothing at all !' he said. 'I've got the blues, the hump, the black cat—what you please. Now be a good chap, and don't think any more about it. I want to finish your hair. It won't take long.'

The interrupted sitting had not been in progress many minutes before the telephone-bell stung the silence, and Charles went to it where it hung in a corner of the studio. A very few words appeased that black round open mouth, and Charles put back the receiver. Frank noticed that his hands were a little unsteady.

'Craddock's coming down here almost immediately, Frank,' he said. 'He's bringing a man called Ward with him, for whom I copied Mr. Wroughton's Reynolds.'

'Customer, I hope,' said Frank. 'What do you want me to do, Charles ?'

Charles flared out at this with the uncontrolled irritability of his jangled nerves.

'Stop here, and behave like a gentleman, I hope,' he said.

If any other man in the world had said that to Frank, he

would assuredly have found the most convenient hard object in full flight for his head. . . .

‘All right, old boy,’ said Frank.

Craddock arrived not a quarter of an hour later, with Mr. Ward. He was in the height of cheerful spirits, having, only an hour before, disposed of his entire lunatic asylum of Post-Impressionist pictures to a friend of Ward’s, whose ambition it was to spend as much as possible over the embellishment, in a manner totally unprecedented and unique, of his house in New York. The dining-room was called the Inferno ; it had black walls with a frieze of real skulls. . . . The floor of the drawing-room was on a steep slant, and all the tables and chairs had two short and two long legs in order to keep their occupants and appurtenances on the horizontal. It was for this room, brightly described to him by the owner, that the Post-Impressionists were designed ; and Craddock, in sympathy with his client’s conviction that they were predestined for it, had put an enormous price on them, and the bargain had been instantly completed. After that, he cheerfully gave up an hour to do Charles this good turn of taking Mr. Ward down to his studio, and on the way he found himself hoping that the picture of Mrs. Lathom had not yet gone in to the Academy. On the way, too, he gave the patron a short *résumé*.

‘I think you never saw young Lathom when he was at work on your Reynolds,’ he said. ‘You will find him a charming young fellow, and he, as soon as the Academy opens this year, will find himself famous. He will leap at one bound to the top of his profession. I strongly recommend you to get him to do a portrait of you now, in fact. His charge for a full length at present is only four hundred pounds. However, here we are, and you will judge for yourself of the value of his work.’

Craddock made himself peculiarly amiable to Frank, while Ward looked at the portraits in the studio. Before the one of Charles’ mother he stopped a long time, regarding it steadily through his glasses. He was a spare, middle-aged man, grey on the temples, rather hawk-like in face, with a low very pleasant voice. From it, he looked at Charles and back again.

‘You may be proud to have your mother’s blood in you, Mr. Lathom,’ he said, ‘and I daresay she’s not ashamed of you. I wish I’d got you to copy some more pictures for me at a hundred pounds apiece.’

Craddock had given up wasting amiability on that desert air

of his playwright, and was standing close to the other two. Quite involuntarily Charles glanced at him, and he had one moment's remote uneasiness. . . . he could not remember if he had given Charles a hundred pounds or fifty. But it really was of no importance. Should Charles say anything, what was easier than to look into so petty a mistake and rectify it. But Charles said nothing whatever.

Ward turned and saw Craddock close to him.

'I was saying to Mr. Lathom,' he said, 'that there were no more full-length copies to be had for a hundred pounds, any more than there are any more original Reynolds of that calibre to be had for the price I gave for Mr. Wroughton's.'

'What did you give?' asked Charles deliberately. He heard his heart beat in his throat as he waited for the answer.

'Well, don't you tell anyone, Mr. Lathom,' he said, 'but I got it for ten thousand pounds. But I've felt ever since as if I had been robbing Mr. Wroughton.'

This time Charles did not look at Mr. Craddock at all.

'Yes, I suppose that's cheap,' he said, 'considering what an enormous price a fine Reynolds fetches.'

'It is. Now I suppose, Mr. Lathom, that portrait of your mother is not for sale. I am building, I may tell you, a sort of annex or Luxembourg to my picture gallery in New York, entirely for modern artists. I should like to see that there: I should indeed.'

Charles smiled.

'You must talk over that with Mr. Craddock,' he said. 'It belongs to him.'

'You may be sure I will. And now I should be very grateful to you, if you could find time and would consent to record—' Mr. Ward had a certain native redundancy—'to record at full length your impression of my blameless but uninteresting person. Your price, our friend tells me, is four hundred pounds, and I shall think I am making a very good bargain, if you will execute your part of the contract.'

Charles saw Craddock, from where he stood, just behind Mr. Ward, give him an almost imperceptible nod, to confirm this valuation. If he had not seen that, it is very likely that he would have accepted this offer without correction. As it was, that signal revolted him. It put him into partnership with . . . with the man in whose studio he now stood. Now and for all future time there could be nothing, either secret or manifest, between them.

' You have made a mistake about the price,' he said to Ward ; ' I only charge two hundred for a portrait. I shall be delighted to paint you for that.'

From a little way off he heard Frank make the noise which is written ' Tut,' and he saw a puzzled look cross Craddock's face, who just shrugged his shoulders and turned on his heel.

' I am very busy for the rest of this week,' said Charles, ' but after that I shall be free.'

He glanced at Craddock, who had moved away and was looking at the portrait of Mrs. Fortescue.

' I am changing my studio,' said Charles in a low voice ; ' I will send you my new address.'

Craddock did not hear this, but Frank did. It seemed to him, with his quick wits, to supply a key to certain things Charles had said that morning. He felt no doubt of it.

Mr. Ward involved himself in a somewhat flowery speech of consent.

' Next week will suit me admirably,' he said, ' and I shall think it an honour to sit to you. The only thing that does not quite satisfy me, is the question of price. You must allow me at some future time to refer to that again. The picture, I may tell you, is designed to be a birthday present for Mrs. Ward, and though the intrinsic merit of the picture, I am sure, will be such that the donor'—he became aware that he could never get out of this labyrinth, and so burst, so to speak, through the hedge—' well, we must talk about it. And now I see I have already interrupted a sitting, and will interrupt no longer. Mr. Craddock, I shall take you away to have some conversation in our taxi about that picture of Mr. Lathom's mother.'

Charles saw them to the door, and came back to Frank.

' I suppose you guess,' he said. ' Well, you've guessed right.'

He threw himself into a chair.

' He has swindled Wroughton,' he said ; ' he has swindled me—me—of a paltry wretched fifty pounds, which is worse, meaner, than the other.'

' And Wroughton ? ' asked Frank.

' He gave him five thousand for the Reynolds, receiving ten. That's not so despicable : there's some point in that. But to save fifty pounds, when he was giving me this studio, getting me commissions, doing everything for me ! There's that damned telephone : see who it is, will you ? '

Frank went to the instrument.

‘Lady Crowborough,’ he said. ‘She wants to see you particularly—very particularly. Can you go to her house at three?’

‘Yes,’ said Charles.

He got up from his chair, white and shaking.

‘There may be something worse, Frank,’ he said. ‘She may have something to tell me, much worse than this. Good God, I wish I had never seen him.’

Frank came back across the studio to Charles.

‘Charles, old chap,’ he said, ‘I’ve often told you there are swindlers in the world, and you’ve run up against one. Well, face it ; don’t wail.’

Charles turned a piteous boyish face to him.

‘But it hurts !’ he said.

He paused a moment.

‘My father killed himself,’ he said, ‘because he had gambled everything away, and none of us knew, nor suspected. That’s where it hurts, Frank. It’s not anything like that, of course, but somehow, it’s the old place.’

‘We’ve all got an old place,’ said Frank. ‘Wounds ? Good Lord, I should be a gaping mass of wounds if I allowed myself to strip. Buck up ! And if you find there’s anything to be done, or talked about, well, ring me up, won’t you ? Now you’re not going to sit here and mope. You are coming straight off with me to have lunch. There’s nothing like food and drink when one is thoroughly upset. And afterwards I shall leave you at the house of that very mature siren.’

Suddenly, it occurred to Charles that Joyce was staying with her, or at any rate had done so last night. Till then his first outpouring of amazed disgust had caused him to forget that. . . . And it is a fact that he ate a very creditable lunch indeed.

(To be continued.)

'FARMER JEREMY'—A POSTSCRIPT.

'FARMER JEREMY,' the article by Professor L. P. Jacks, which appeared in the last number of the 'CORNHILL,' has aroused much attention.

One of the most interesting comments upon it comes from a practical farmer in the Eastern Counties. His expression of active sympathy with the ideals and the practice of 'Farmer Jeremy' will do more than anything else to make the readers of the 'CORNHILL' realise the living truth of the picture set before them.

To the Editor of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

Helmingham,
Valley Farm,
Stowmarket,

June 30th, 1913.

DEAR SIR,—I was delighted to read in your last month's issue the letter written by Professor L. P. Jacks, headed 'Farmer Jeremy and his Ways'; it met my ideas exact, in fact I was obliged to read it a second time; I, like him, was bred a farmer for generations and have worked at it all my life since I left school and am over sixty years of age—have been at it for myself forty years and am doing over 300 acres of heavy land now under his rule and have seen lots of ups and downs. I heartily endorse all he say, it is all quite true, I still farm under a lord, not a petty gentleman or farm dealer. I like to see lords and dukes at top and their daughters in the hunting field, we can farm with the greatest confidence and the same good feeling would exist now as it did then between landlord, tenant and labourer if these agitators would go and 'dig' instead of upsetting the country it would be much better for the nation.

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

(signed) A. GARNHAM.

